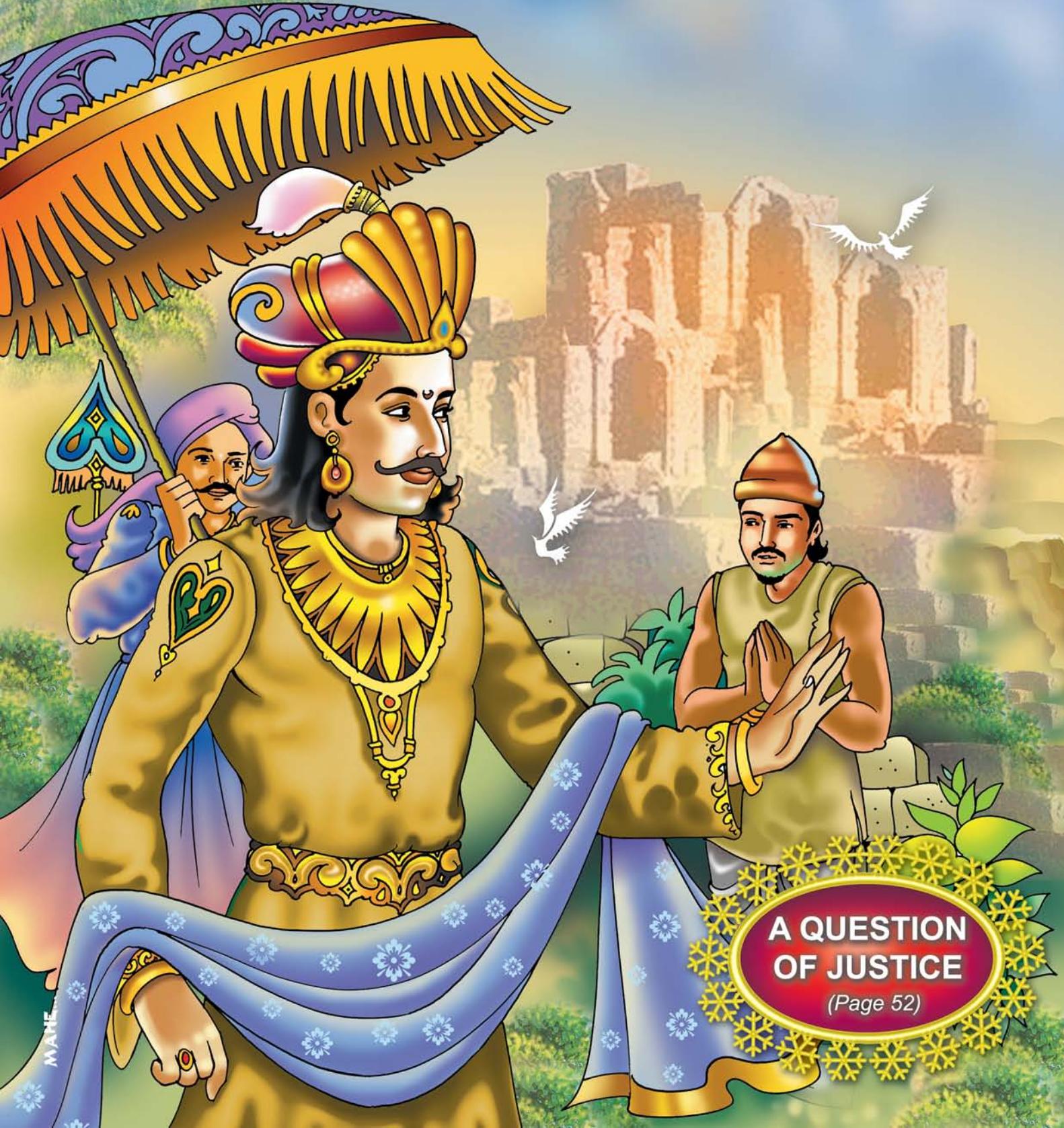




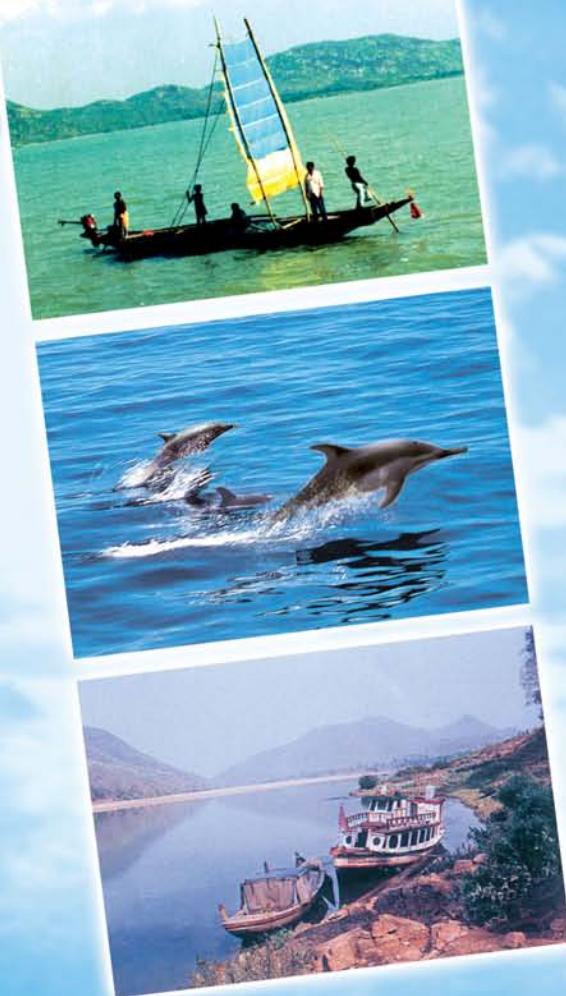
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CHANDAMAMA



**A QUESTION
OF JUSTICE**

(Page 52)



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CONTENTS



7
The Princess's Tests
(Vikram and Vetal)



10
Spring Festival
(Ruskin Bond)



20
Shifting Neighbours
(Humorous Story)



30
The Royal Road to Conquering an Enemy
(Anecdotes from the Lives of the Great)



43
The Flickering Light
(Mystery)



50
Glimpses of Devi Bhagavatam
(Mythology)

- ★ Mail Bag 06
- ★ Indiascope 13
- ★ Two Friends
(A Jataka tale) 14
- ★ Science Fair 18
- ★ The Cap That Whispers 24
- ★ Laugh Till You Drop 26
- ★ Soaring Faster and Higher
(Adventure and Exploration) 27
- ★ News Flash 32
- ★ Kaleidoscope 33
- ★ The Last Resort
(From the Arabian Nights) 37
- ★ Read and React
(Prize winners) 42
- ★ The Clever Wife
(A Folktale from Kerala) 46
- ★ Chandamama Quiz 49
- ★ A Question of Justice
(A page from Indian history) 52
- ★ Puzzle Dazzle 55
- ★ Goddard Shows the Way for Space
 Probes
(It happened in March) 56
- ★ Stumped by a Beggar 58
- ★ Garuda (Comics) 59
- ★ Children in the News 63
- ★ The King's Brother-in-Law 64
- ★ Photo Caption Contest 66

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1st March 2006

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DREAD OF EXAMINATIONS

March is the month of exams in India, before schools and colleges are closed for the long summer vacation. When everybody eagerly looks forward to holidays, the days preceding are held with fear. The dread of examinations is generally called 'exam fever', which has now become a cliche, for, there are 'prescriptions' to get over this malady.

Days were when, after the new academic session starts in June-July, mid-term exams are held sometime in September or October, followed by exams in December before the recess for Christmas and New Year. Then came what were known as Annual examinations which decided one's promotion to the next higher class or failure necessitating a repetition of a whole year's study. The so-called exam fever was more prevalent in those days than now.

School authorities have found a way to lessen the fear of exams. Most of them nowadays hold periodical class tests, sometimes every week or a fortnight, so that the children are regular in revising their lessons and they get more chances to outshine their classmates and receive accolades more often, so that they are prepared to face major hurdles.

Children are familiar with the calls made on the sports ground: "On your mark, get ready, go!" These can be adapted in studies also. Putting in regular attendance in school is very important, as it is the first step to observing discipline in life. Be attentive to what the teachers tell you or read out to you. Take down notes wherever it is necessary. Get your doubts cleared with the teacher the very same day. Back home, go through the notes and recollect what had been told orally, and write down points. Read the portions that are likely to be taken up the following day so that you are one step ahead of the teacher. If all this is done regularly, you will need only to browse your books and notes when you are called upon to appear in tests and exams.

You wouldn't need any other prescriptions to prevent exam fever, do you? The key word is Discipline; the others will automatically fall in line.

A man's reputation is the opinion people have of him. His character is what he really is.

-*Jack Miner*

All I say is, if you cannot ride two horses, you have no right in the circus.

-*James Maxton*

Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate. Mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind.

- *John Fitzgerald Kennedy*



**Reader M.Bupathy of
Tiruchengode writes:**

I remember the Panchatantra stories in comics form in your *Ambulimama* issues. They were very good. Please republish them in English in *Chandamama*. You could also publish the series in a booklet form. I am sure you will meet with a good sale.

**This came from Rashi Reddy J.,
Bangalore:**

I was reading your magazine the other day for the first time. I find it very informative. It helps me in my school projects, too. Your read-and-react contest helps children to improve their creativity.

**Manjima Mukherjee of Ariadaha,
Kolkata, has this to say:**

I just love your magazine. My favourites are Vikram-Vetala and Photo caption contest. Please introduce a feature on current affairs in every issue. I consider myself as a devoted reader of your magazine. Could you start a photography contest for children?

**Reader Ambuj Amber Trivedi
writes from Barabanki, U.P:**

Chandamama is my favourite magazine. It has lovely stories and I read all of them. The poem "Noble Deed" in the December issue was very good. "Laugh till you drop" is my favourite. Please introduce drawing contests in which we can participate.

MAIL BAG



**Hans K. of Srirangam,
Tiruchirapalli, writes:**

The first *Chandamama* issue I read was the February issue. I liked the story Vikramaditya and the Thieves. But I have a doubt. The royal treasurer removes a sixth casket of jewels, but he is not punished. Why? The treatment given to the four thieves by the king is very apt.

**Reader Sumit Srivastava of
Ranchi writes:**

I have been reading *Chandamama* from my childhood. The magazine is dedicated to Indian heritage and culture. The stories represent the way of life in our country. I request you to publish the popular folk tales of other countries, too. How about some stories of Hans Christian Andersen? *Chandamama*'s endeavour to enlighten the reader's mind is really appreciable.

**NEW TALES
OF KING
VIKRAM AND
THE VETALA**

The Princess's Tests

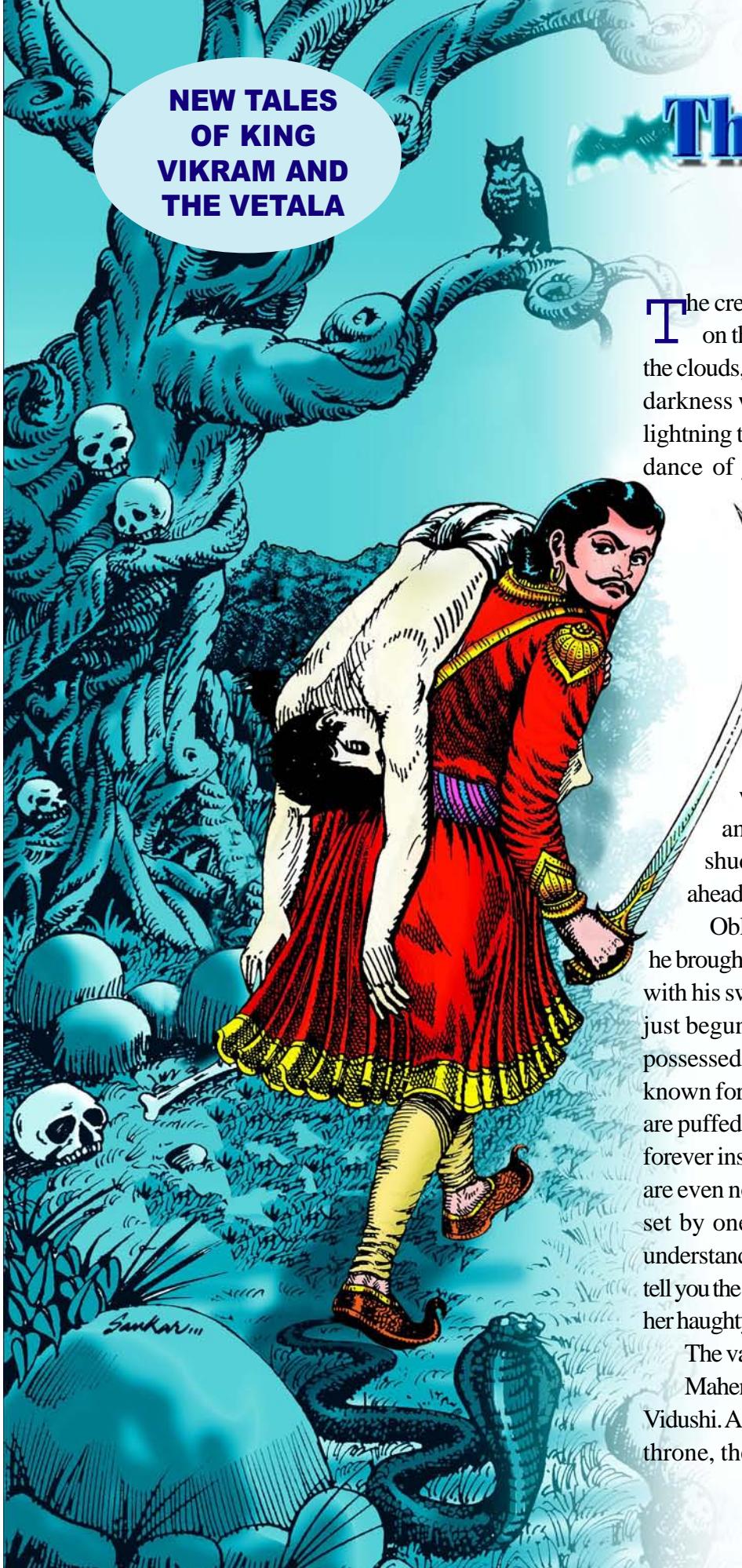
The cremation ground presented an eerie spectacle on that dark night. The moon was hidden behind the clouds, and it was drizzling intermittently. The pitch darkness was relieved only by occasional flashes of lightning that lit up the sombre scene, causing an eerie dance of jerky shadows in the cremation ground.

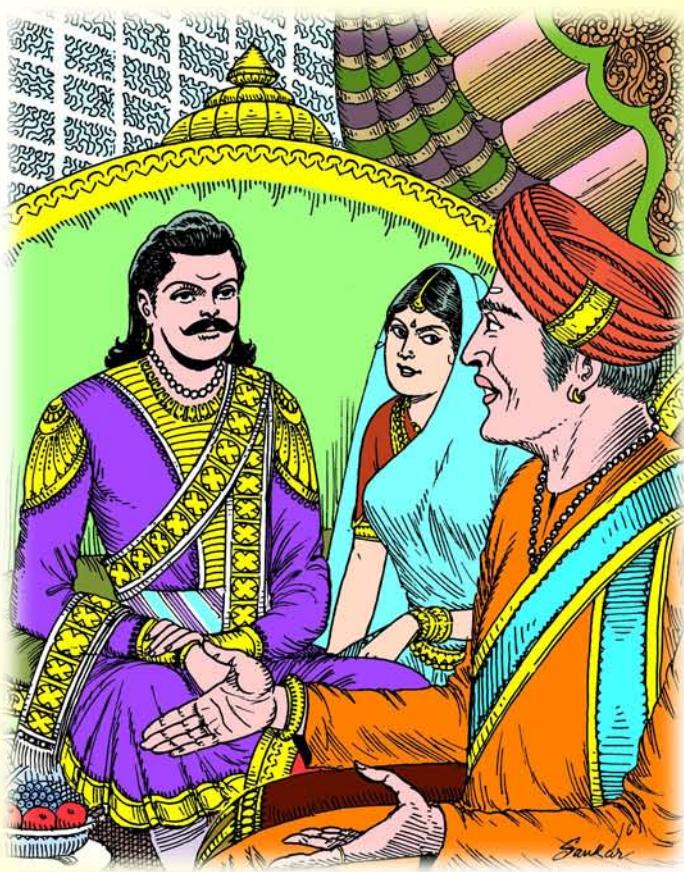
Occasionally, a jackal's spine-chilling howl or the blood-curdling laughter of some invisible evil spirit cut into the silence that hung like a shroud over the area. Altogether, it was a scene that would strike terror into the bravest heart. But nothing could daunt the intrepid King Vikram. Once again, he made his way to the gnarled tree from which the ancient corpse was hanging. Bones crunched under his feet, and a screeching ghost rose from the dust in shuddering frenzy as he marched determinedly ahead.

Oblivious to everything but the mission at hand, he brought the hanging corpse down by cutting the rope with his sword. Slinging it astride his shoulder, he had just begun his return journey when the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O king! Most scholars are known for their humility. But there are also a few who are puffed up with pride about their learning. They are forever insulting and putting down others. Perhaps you are even now struggling to perform an impossible task set by one such arrogant scholar. So that you may understand the nature of such people better, I shall now tell you the story of Princess Vidushi, whose learning made her haughty and impossible to please. Listen to the story."

The vampire then narrated the following tale.

Mahendra, the king of Malya, had a daughter named Vidushi. As she – being his only child – was to inherit the throne, the king spared no pains to give her the best





possible education. The greatest scholars in the land were engaged to teach her statecraft, literature and the arts. The princess proved to be a bright and eager pupil. By the time she grew up to womanhood, she had acquired a formidable reputation as a scholar. She had also grown quite haughty.

Soon, the question of the princess's marriage came up. Her parents discussed the issue with the *Rajguru*. He gave it as his opinion that as Vidushi was an intelligent girl who knew her own mind, she should be given the freedom to choose her own husband. The king and queen thought this as a sound advice, and decided to follow it.

Since the princess was as beautiful and accomplished as she was learned, proposals for her hand began pouring in from the royal families of the neighbouring kingdoms. But the king and queen soon discovered that their daughter had very clear ideas about the groom of her choice. He had to be her equal in every respect – nothing short of this would be accepted.

King Mahendra announced a *swayamvara* for his daughter. The one who passed the test set by the princess

herself would win her hand. Many kings, princes, and noblemen tried their luck at the *swayamvara*. However, no one could pass the princess's test, and all had to return disappointed.

As days passed, the number of suitors began to dwindle. A year after the announcement of the *swayamvara*, the princess still remained unwed.

It was at this juncture that Abhilash, the prince of Rudrapur, heard about the challenge thrown by the princess, and decided to take it up. He reached Malya, where he met the king, introduced himself, and told him about his objective.

The meeting of Princess Vidushi with Prince Abhilash took place in a palace chamber, in the presence of the king and queen. At first glance, Abhilash was smitten by the princess's beauty. But remembering that he had to first pass the test to win her hand, he braced himself to face it. Princess Vidushi, too, appeared impressed by her charming suitor.

With a smile, she said, "I shall ask you three questions. If your answers satisfy me, I shall give my consent to this marriage." He nodded assent.

Her first question was, "Tell me about the people of your kingdom, O prince. Are they dogs or crows?"

At first, the prince was taken aback. Then, after a moment's thought, he answered, "All my people are crows; there are no dogs among us."

Hearing this, the princess smiled. She then went on to the next question. "You are a prince of the *Chandra Vamsa* (Lunar dynasty). Do you take after the moon in character, or...?" She paused.

Without hesitation, Abhilash promptly answered, "No. In my nature, I'm like the sun."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Princess Vidushi. "And now for my last question. Tell me, O prince, why do children weep when their old father goes to the forest?"

The prince replied, "They weep due to ignorance."

"Why 'ignorance'? Are you saying that the father will return?" challenged the princess.

"He will certainly return – but to some other house, perhaps," Abhilash confidently asserted.

A smile broke out on the princess's face as she heard

this. Turning to her parents, she declared, ‘Prince Abhilash has passed the test by answering my questions correctly. I shall be glad to marry him.’

The king and queen rejoiced to hear this. The king got up and embraced his would-be son-in-law. The wedding was conducted with great fanfare.

Concluding the story at this point, the vampire demanded, “O king, wasn’t the whole exercise – the princess’s questions, and her suitor’s answers to them – a farcical one, like a pantomimed conversation between a dumb person and a blind one? Neither the questions nor their answers appear to show any signs of learning or intellect – the questions were meaningless; the answers, disjointed! So, what did it all mean? Did Abhilash really pass Vidushi’s test at all? Or was she only lying so that she could marry him, having been fascinated by his charm? If you know the answer, speak up. I warn you – if you choose to keep quiet despite knowing the answer, your head shall split into a thousand fragments!”

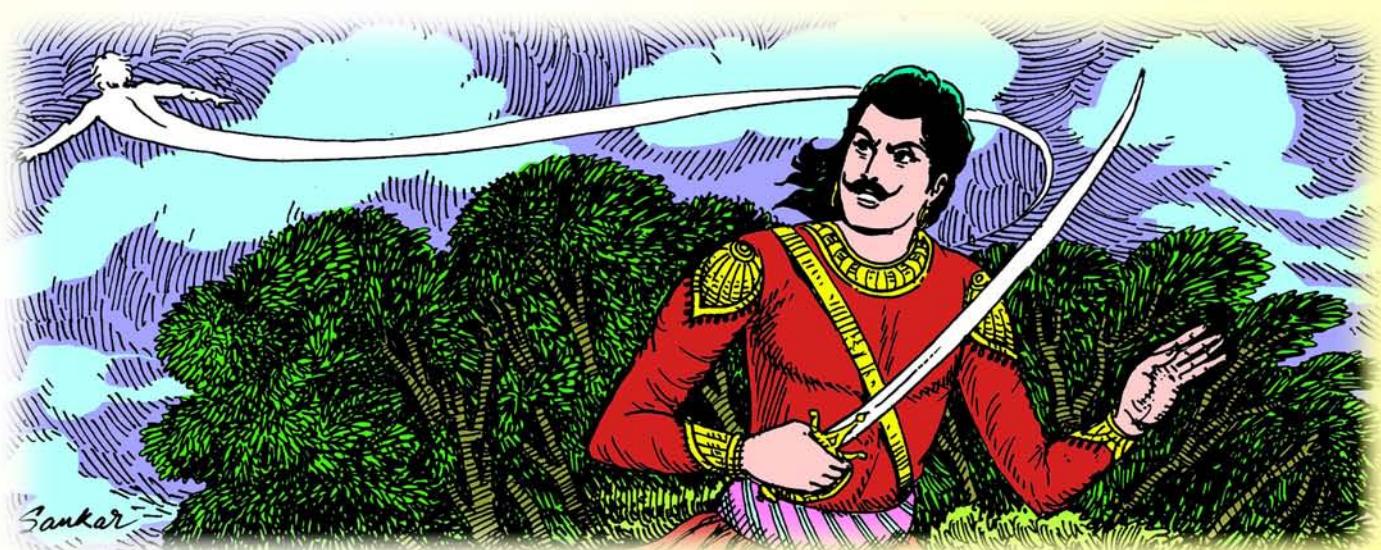
The king promptly answered, “There is nothing farcical or incoherent about the questions and the answers – on the contrary, both reveal the intelligence of the persons concerned. The meaning of the first question, as to whether the people of Rudrapur were dogs or crows, was this – did they fight savagely among themselves, as dogs do over food, or did they amicably share whatever they had, like crows? The prince grasped this meaning and answered that his people were like crows in their unity.

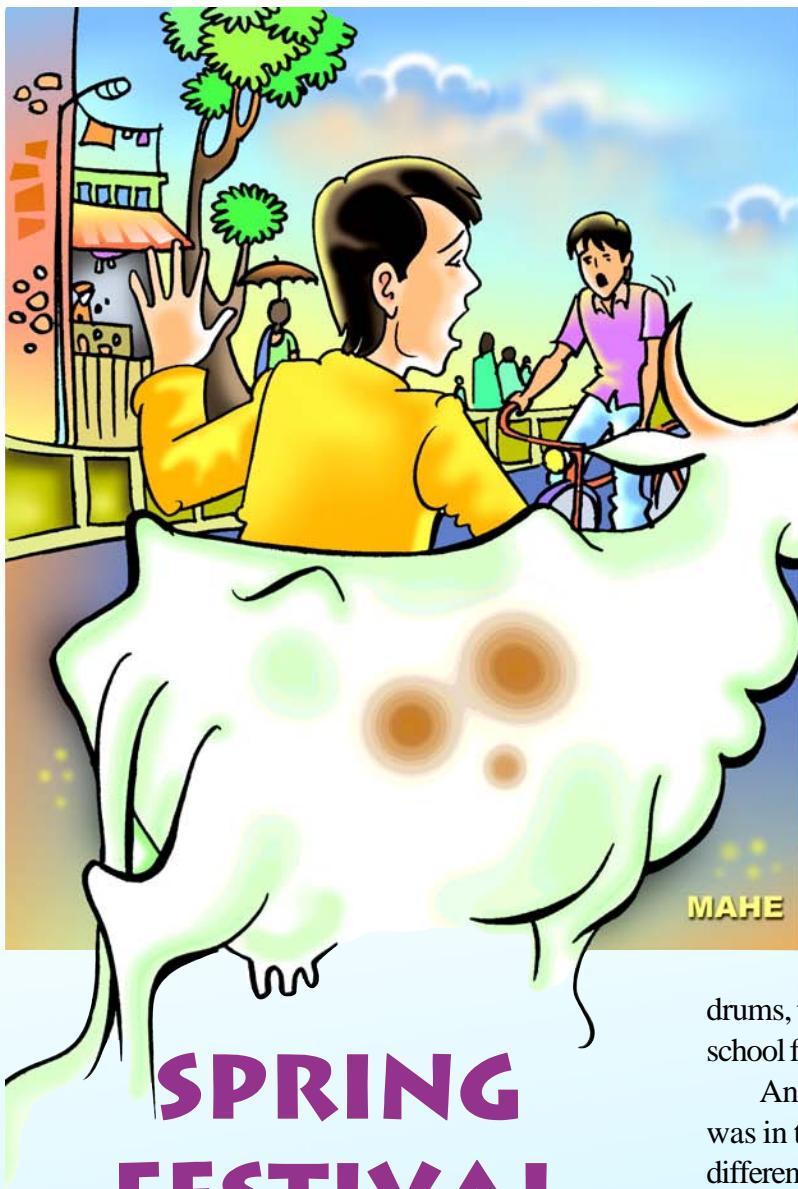
“For the second question, Princess Vidushi asked Prince Abhilash if he was like the moon in character. What she really meant was, did he shine in borrowed light, like the sun? This, too, the prince interpreted correctly, and he answered that he was like the sun who generates his own light. Needless to say, the princess was satisfied with his answer.

“Lastly, the princess wanted to know why children weep when their old father goes to the forest. Here, ‘forest’ is a metaphor for the cremation ground. In other words, she was asking why the family members weep when the head of the family dies. Understanding her question, the prince replied that they weep due to ignorance – for, according to Indian religious belief, only the body is subject to destruction; the soul does not die, and is reborn elsewhere. He then went on to explain this in his next statement – that the father would return to another house. In other words, he said that the father would be reborn later in another body.

Thus, the conversation between the princess and the prince, far from being senseless, is a highly meaningful exchange between two well-matched intellectuals.”

On hearing this, the vampire nodded in approval, before going off into peal after peal of thunderous laughter. The next moment, he, along with the corpse, moved off the king’s shoulder with a jerk and flew back to the tree. King Vikram gave a little sigh as he gazed upon the scene. Then, he squared his shoulders and retraced his steps towards the tree.





SPRING FESTIVAL

Anil said, 'You're a snob, mister.' 'Why?' I asked. 'Because you won't play Holi. You want to shut yourself up in your house when everyone else is celebrating the coming of spring. I know, you are afraid of spoiling your clothes.'

I shrugged my shoulders to let him know that he could think what he liked.

'You're afraid of your parents, that's why it is,' continued Anil. 'You're afraid of being punished for running around with bazaar people!'

'You're welcome to think so,' I said coldly.

Anil had often told me about Holi. It is not merely a

From the pen of
RUSKIN BOND



Hindu festival of playing with colours, when men and women and children throw coloured powder and water on each other, when there is singing and shouting and the beating of drums; it also heralds the Hindu New Year, when Nature is born again, blossoming out in colour and music.

New colour, new music, new life. Seasons die, and seasons are born again. The colours that are thrown are an expression of joy in the new springtime of life and young love.

The Holi festival held a fascination for me. But until I was fifteen, my parents, who had brought me to India two years earlier (when my father had taken a job with a new hydroelectric project), had not allowed me to take part in the celebration. They were afraid I might get hurt in the rough play, or be lost in the bazaars. I had stayed at home, listening to the drums, the songs, and the inviting shouts of some of my school friends.

Anil's father kept a cloth shop in the bazaar, and it was in the bazaar that I had met Anil, for he went to a different school. I was walking home from the post office and did not pay much attention to the big cow that was moving leisurely through the crowd, nosing around the vegetable stalls.

A cyclist came down the road, pedalling furiously. Pedestrians scattered. I found myself beside the cow, in the middle of the road. The cyclist was faced with the choice of colliding either with me or with the cow. He chose me.

'You clumsy fellow!' I cried, picking myself up from the ground, while the cow stared sorrowfully at me.

'I'm sorry,' said the cyclist, a boy of about my age. 'I couldn't help it.'

'Why not?'

'Why not? Because if I had not bumped into you, I

would have bumped into the cow!' Then, as he saw me growing indignant, he hurried on. 'Please don't misunderstand. It is not that I prefer the cow to you, but I might have broken my head if I had banged into her! She is an immovable object, and you are not!'

I could think of no retort.

A few weeks later I saw the boy again, but we were on a lonely road this time, with plenty of space where one could avoid bumping into each other; but, seeing a familiar face, the boy swerved his bicycle dangerously to the edge of the road and almost swept me off my feet.

'Oh, hello there!' he said, making sure his cycle had not been damaged. 'And how are you?'

'I'm fine,' I said, preparing to continue my walk.

The boy got into step with me and pursued the topic of my well-being. 'I hope I did not hurt you that day in the bazaar.'

'You were going the other way just now, weren't you?' I said, very rudely.

He looked disappointed but then he smiled, and there was something about his smile that made me smile, too. And he said, 'Don't be so angry...'

'I'm not angry,' I said.

'Please don't be hurt.'

'I'm not hurt.'

'Please don't be a snob!'

This had more effect. The boy watched me with astonishment as my cheeks grew red.

'I'm not a snob!' I said.

The boy grinned at me. 'Now you are both angry and hurt! So you are not a snob... Good! ... Come and have some chaat with me.'

Standing off the road was a small wooden shop, draped with sacking. I hesitated in the entrance, suspicious of the wild sweet smells, of the murmur of unfamiliar voices, of the fact that I knew nothing about the stranger who had invited me in. But to have refused would have been to invite further derision. I followed the boy into the shop.

I discovered that chaat was a spiced and sweetened mixture of different fruits and vegetables—potatoes, guavas, bananas and oranges, all sliced up—served on broad green leaves and eaten with the help

of a little stick like a toothpick. It had an unusual and exciting flavour.

'You like it?' asked the boy.

'I think so,' I said.

'Don't think so,' he said, 'Just like it.'

'Is it—is it bad for the stomach?'

'For unfamiliar stomachs. So the best way to make your stomach familiar is to keep eating.'

He ordered more, in spite of my protests. Then he said, 'May I know your name?'

'Laurie,' I said, and asked him his.

'Anil, Anil Kumar! Kumar means prince, but of course I am not a prince.'

His black hair was thick and strong. His eyes were a deep brown. He wore a thin, almost transparent cotton shirt, broad white pyjamas, and open slippers with leather straps.

We ate chaat and talked, and that is how Anil and I became friends.



We would often meet in the evenings and at different places; and, it was as Anil said, my stomach soon became accustomed to unfamiliar cooking. We took walks across the Maidan, a spacious, grassy ground always crowded with children and dogs and cows and people making speeches. And on holidays we would cycle out of town, into the fields, down to the river.

As Holi neared, Anil began to make his preparations. He fashioned a sort of bicycle pump from a piece of bamboo, and tried it out with water. It worked!

‘You’d better get out your worst clothes,’ he said. ‘The colour won’t come off easily.’

‘You don’t expect me to play?’ I said.

‘And why not?’

‘Well, first there are my parents...’

‘And second there is yourself. You are ashamed to play.’

‘No, it’s not that,’ I said.

Anil put his hand on my shoulder and gave me a stern look. ‘Have you forgotten that a few days after we met I sent you a Christmas card?’

‘That’s true,’ I said. ‘But you sent it in February.’



‘Well, I hadn’t met you in December. Do you know that I pinched my father’s best greeting card, and cut out the page that had been written on, in order to send it to you?’

‘Yes, I noticed that. Did you want me to think you’d bought it yourself?’

‘Well, cards are not available in February! Anyway, the point is, I share your festivals but you do not share mine!’

And having banished all argument, he returned to fashioning his bamboo pump.

I heard the shouting and clapping, the singing and beating of drums. I jumped out of bed and ran to the window.

A procession of boys and girls were moving down the road. They were laughing and throwing colour about, and their clothes were rich shades of orange and mauve and red and green. Down the road came the procession, and down the road came Anil with his bicycle pump.

The procession passed on, but Anil lingered near our gate. It was difficult to recognize him, he wore only a loincloth and looked like an effigy of a green god.

My room had its own entrance, and I slipped out through the garden, climbed the wall, and joined Anil on the road.

Anil smiled, a white smile in a green face, and covered my face with purple powder. Then he squirted me with his bicycle pump. He had brought a pump for me, too.

We joined the procession and went all over the town, shouting and singing and throwing colour, through the bazaar and across the Maidan, painting the town with the colours of spring.

And when I returned home in the afternoon, drenched with colour from head to foot, I found my parents waiting for me in the verandah. They didn’t recognize me at first, but when they did, my father burst into laughter, while my mother told me to get under the slower immediately.

‘Well, I suppose he can look after himself now,’ I heard my father saying. ‘We’ll be here till the end of the year, and it’s time he found friends of his own age.’



HOLI IS FESTIVAL TIME

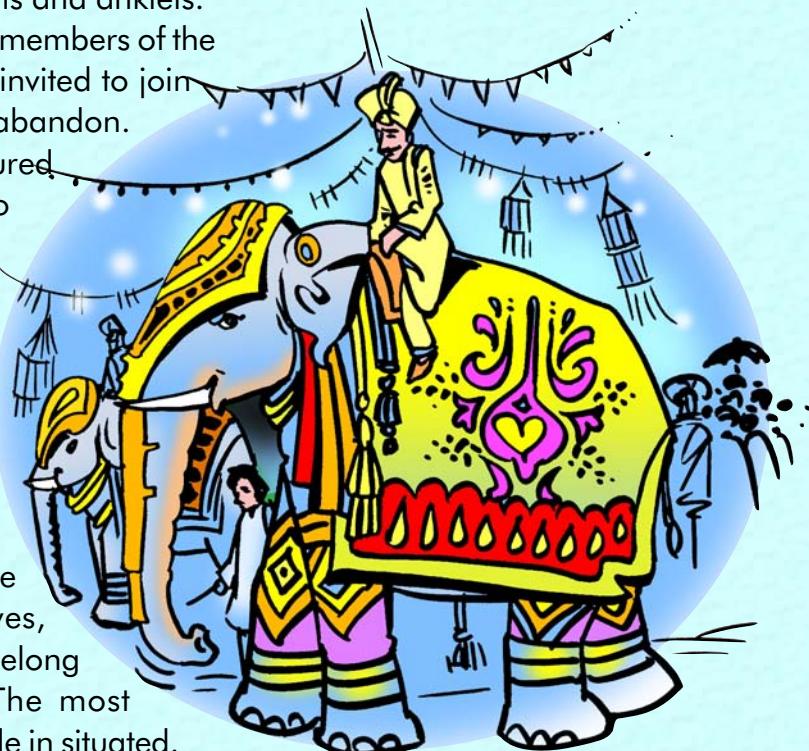
Organised in March—a day before Holi, the festival of colours—is the **Elephant Festival** in Jaipur, Rajasthan. The elephants, enchantingly groomed and decorated, not only move with poise but run races and even play polo. This grand show is held in the sprawling Chaugan stadium, which is simultaneously brought alive by musicians and dancers. One may wonder whether the ceremonial procession to mark the start of the festival is a mini-Republic Day Parade. For, the procession comprises not only caparisoned elephants and camels, but lancers on horses, chariots, cannons and palanquins. The star attraction, of course, is the elephants, most of whom are cow elephants. Their forehead and trunks are tastefully painted. The legs will have painted motifs. The tail and legs are attached with tinkling bells and anklets.

The festival reaches a crescendo when members of the audience—inevitably foreign tourists—are invited to join the revelry and they participate with gay abandon.

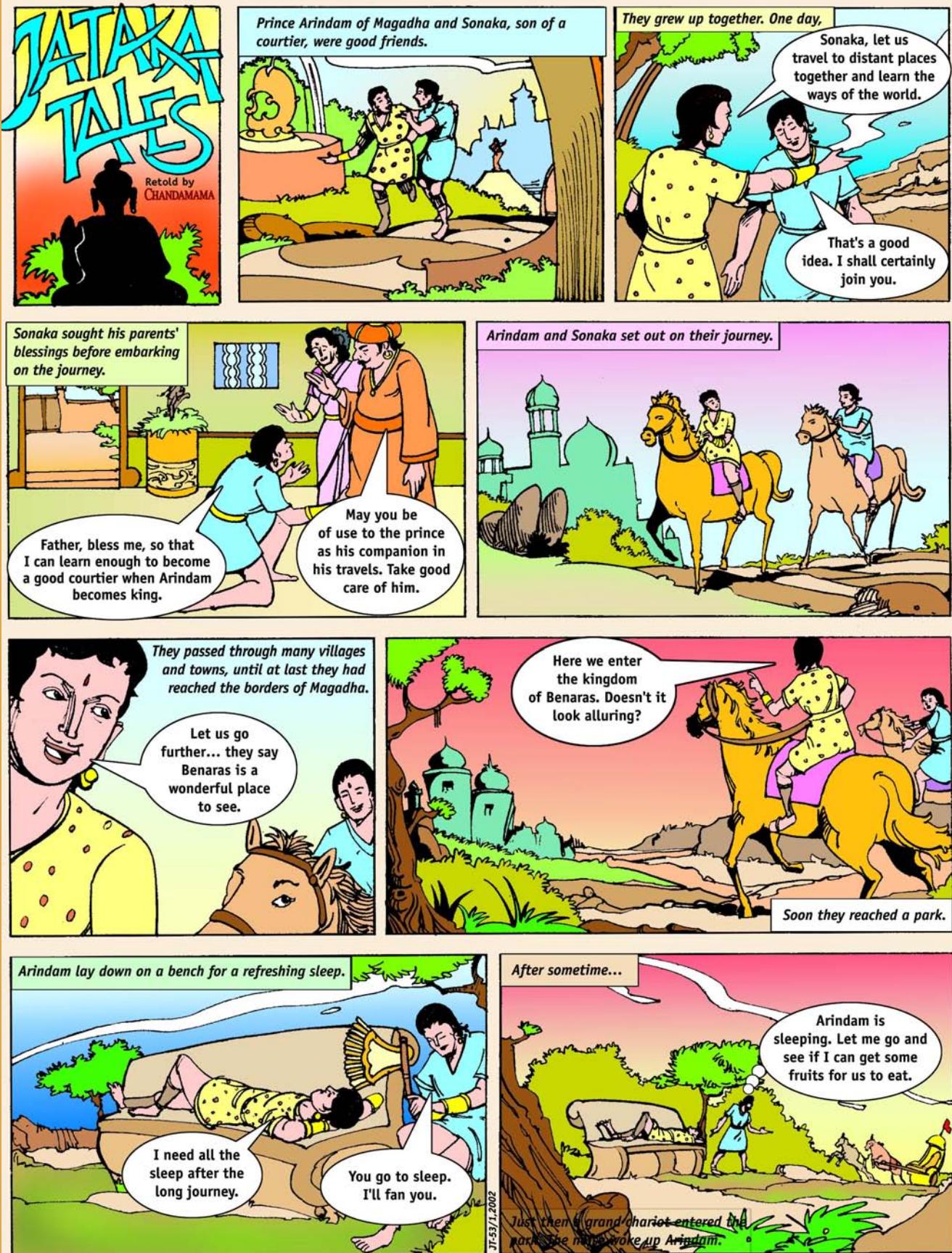
They are given *pichkari's* containing coloured water and handfuls of coloured powder to play Holi with each other. No wonder they forget themselves in the merry-making. The Elephant Festival is organised by the Rajasthan Tourism Department.

A festival of dance and music takes place in Maharashtra also in March. Called the **Ellora Festival**, it is held at the famous world heritage cave temples of Ellora. There are 34 caves cut out of the slopes of the Chamadri hills. The caves, excavated between A.D. 600 and 1000, belong to Buddhist, Jain and Hindu faiths. The most prominent cave is where the Kailash temple is situated.

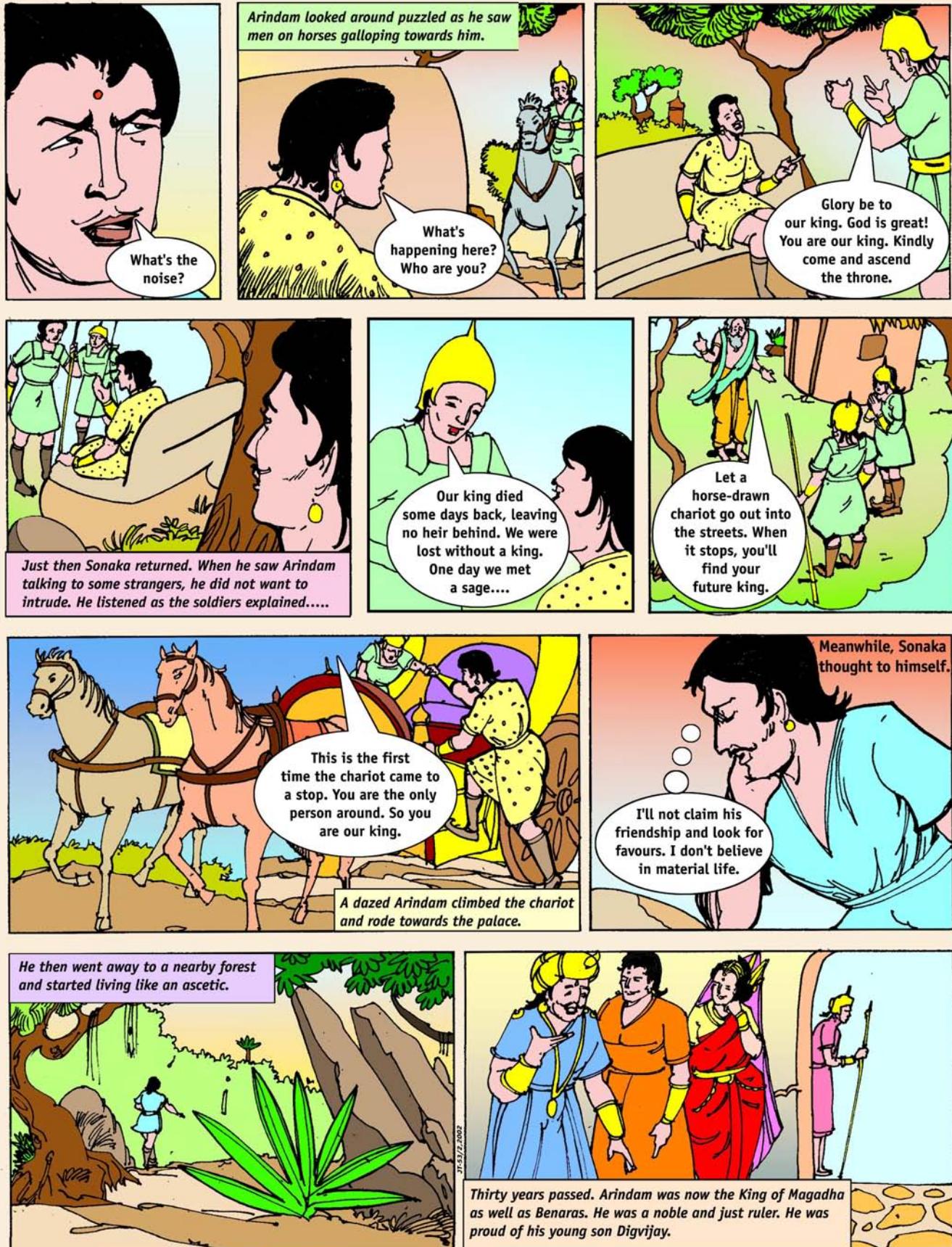
It is the largest monolithic structure in the world, sculpted out of a single rock by nearly 7,000 labourers over a 150 year period. The festival showcases the best talents in various dance forms and music systems with the caves forming a splendid backdrop. It is a charming experience to go round the caves, imbibing centuries old history and culture. The festival is organised by the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation.



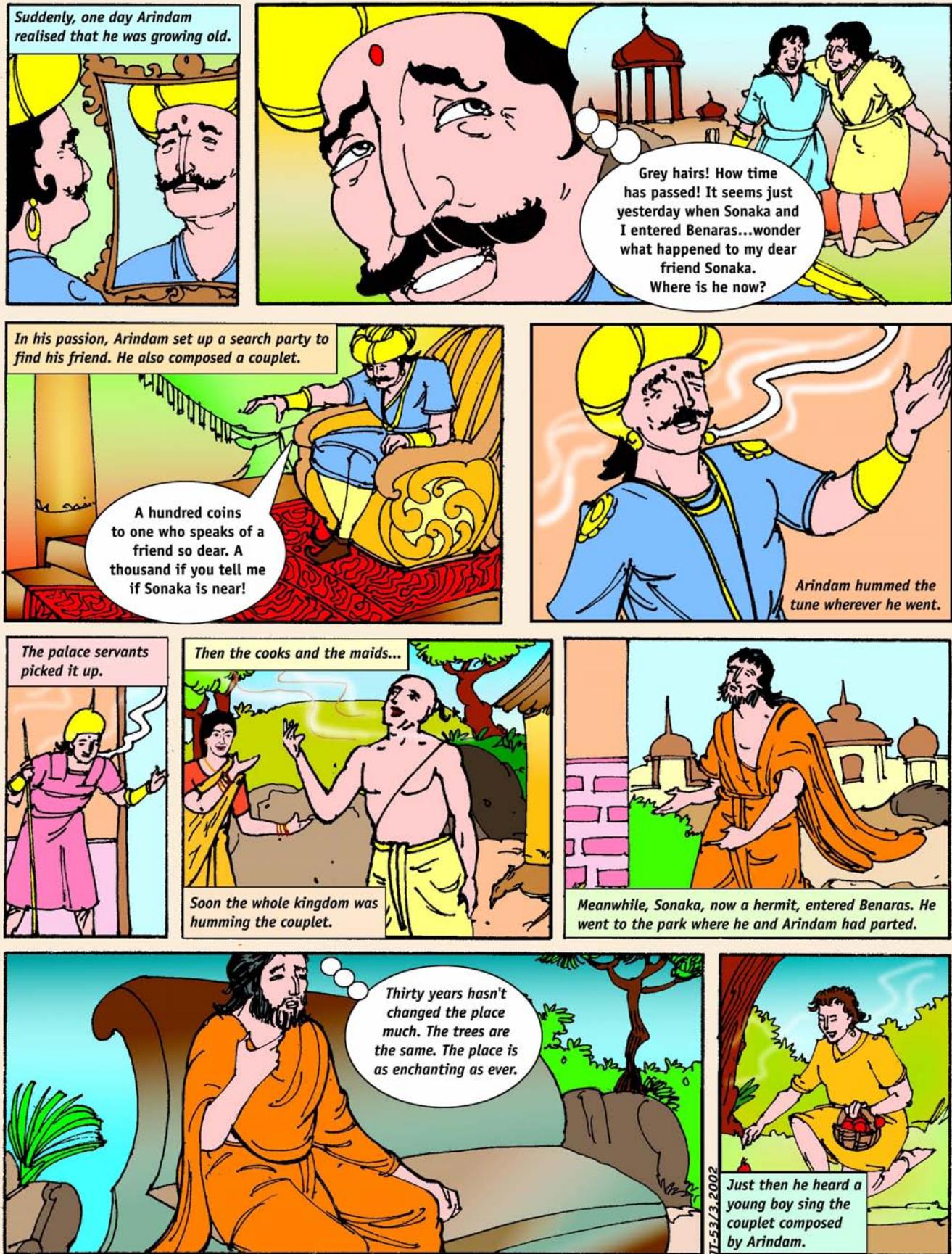
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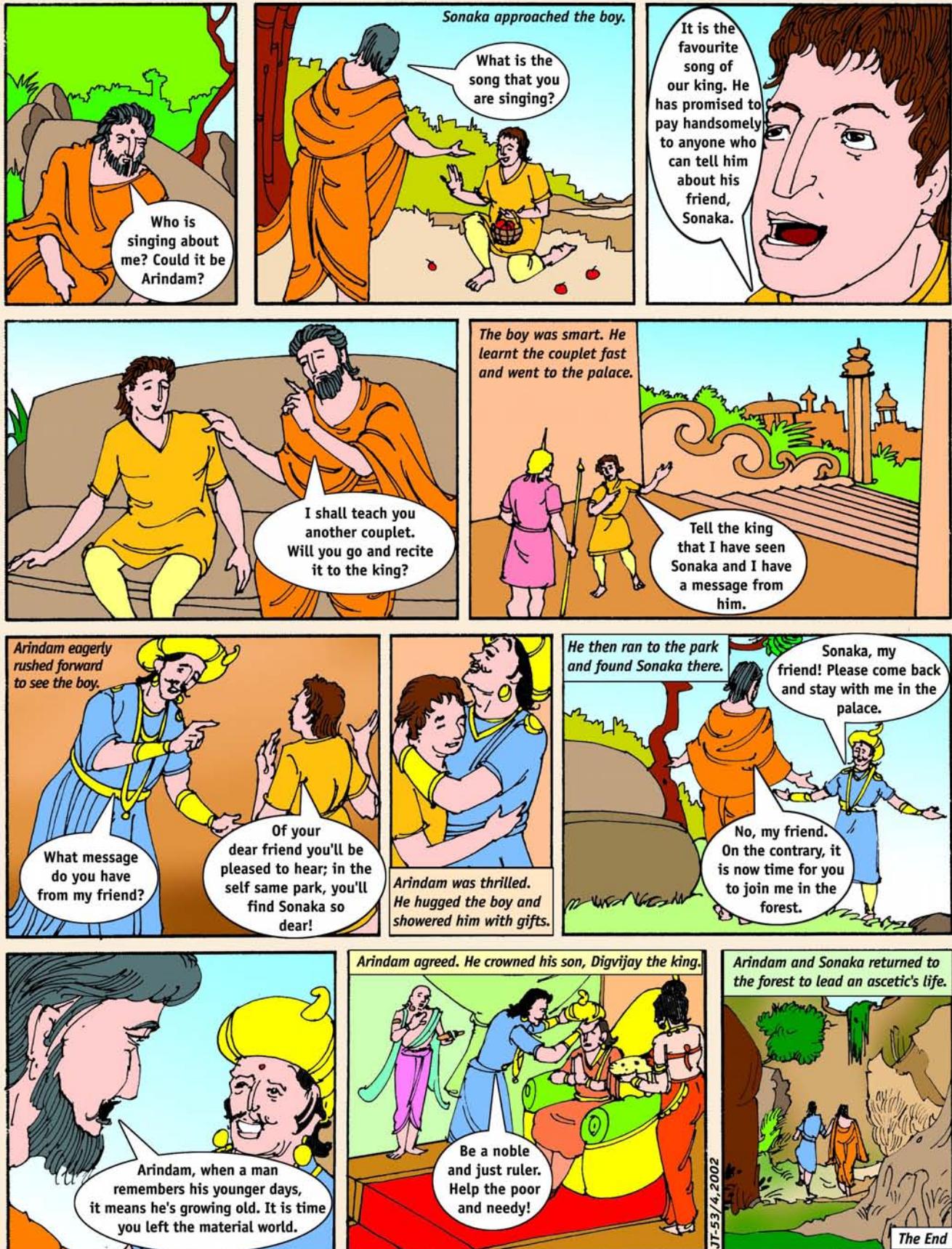
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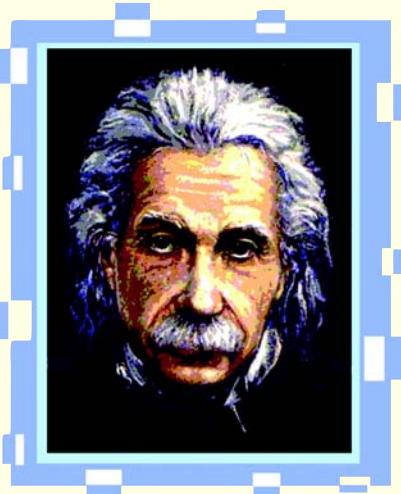
SCIENCE FAIR



- By Rosscone
Krishna Pillai

MARCH BORN: ALBERT EINSTEIN

On March 14, 1879 was born Albert Einstein, one of the greatest scientific geniuses of all time, in Ulm, Germany. His parents were Jews engaged in electrical apparatus manufacture. When their business failed, the family moved first to Munich and then to Milan in Italy in 1894.



Albert did poorly in school, and failed to get admission to the Zurich Polytechnic in Switzerland. He could join it in his next attempt and graduated in mathematics and physics in 1900. He could, however, get only the job of a clerk in the Swiss Patent office at Berne. While working there till 1909, he devoted his spare time to theoretical physics. As a result, he could publish five epoch-making papers in 1905 in a leading German scientific journal, which revolutionized physics for ever. They radically transformed the concept of space and time.

The first paper challenged the classical theory that electromagnetic energy, including light, consists of waves propagating through a mysterious medium called ether; Einstein argued that light acts as though it consists of individually distinct particles of energy or *light quanta*, which he later called photons. He explained the phenomenon called photoelectric effect by which certain metals emit a stream of particles—electrons—when light with a given frequency is made to shine upon their surface. This theory earned for him a Ph.D. from the University of Zurich in 1905 and the Nobel Prize in 1921 and formed the basis for the branch of physics called *quantum mechanics*.

Einstein's second paper proved that molecules and atoms are real (and do exist). In his third paper, he developed the famous *Special Theory of Relativity* by which he concluded that mass and time are relative to the frame of reference, that light is a universal constant and no medium called ether exists. He found that the mass of an object increases with its velocity and said that no object can travel faster than light. These hypotheses led to his ever-famous equation, $E=mc^2$. The total amount of energy 'E' locked in a mass 'm' is equal to 'm' multiplied by the square of the velocity of light 'c', a constant (299,792 km per second). This equation showed that mass and energy are not indestructible and are interconvertible.

All these findings brought Einstein universal renown and recognition. He became a lecturer, then associate professor, and professor at different universities in Switzerland and Germany. In 1933, he left for the U.S.A. and joined the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, where he remained till his death in 1955. He had urged President Roosevelt to produce the atom bomb, but later staunchly stood for nuclear disarmament.

Einstein's genius paved the way to many scientific breakthroughs of the last century, including nuclear power, quantum mechanics, lasers, artificial satellites, and space travel.

ON A 9-YEAR VOYAGE

A very powerful three-stage Atlas 5 rocket lifted off from the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida, U.S.A., on January 19 and hurled NASA's 478-kg spacecraft, *New Horizons*, into space to go to the outermost edge of the solar system on the first ever mission to explore Pluto, the ninth planet.

The spacecraft, speeding away at 54,000 kmph (the fastest flight of any spacecraft launched from Earth) is scheduled to take nine-and-a-half years to cover a distance of 4,500 million kilometres and arrive for its closest approach to Pluto on July 14, 2015. That will be the 50th anniversary of the first flyby of planet Mars by *Mariner 4*, the American mission that began the exploration of the planets.

New Horizons will also explore Pluto's large moon, Charon, and the mysterious vast region of icy, rocky objects including comets and small planets, called *Kuiper Belt*, lying beyond planet Neptune's orbit.

The spacecraft, powered by a small plutonium-fired electric generator, after passing Jupiter in 13 months and boosted by its gravity, will arrive near Pluto in the next eight years and conduct seven experiments during five months of studies of the planet and its moons, and then investigate one or two larger objects in the *Kuiper Belt*. It is expected that these studies will provide clues to how the solar system was formed.

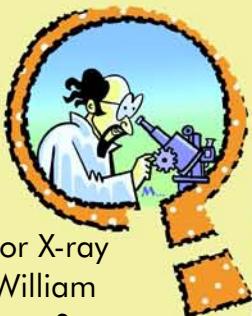
PLUTO: Name came from a school girl

Pluto was discovered in March 1930 by Clyde W. Tombaugh at the Lowell Observatory in Arizona, U.S.A. He was the only American to find a planet in the solar system. The name Pluto, who in Roman mythology is the god of the Underworld, was suggested by 11-year-old Venetia Burney Phair, a school girl in Britain, for the newly discovered ninth planet. It was conveyed to astronomer Herbert Turner of Oxford, who passed it on to the Lowell Observatory, which formally adopted the name for the planet on May 1, 1930. Venetia, now 87 years old, retired as a teacher in Surrey, U.K.



SCIENCE QUIZ

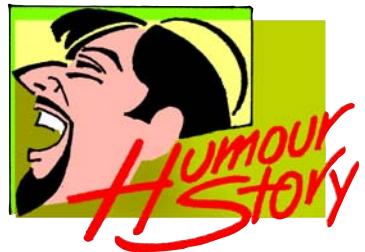
1. Who discovered DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) in 1868?
a. Ivan Kristopher;
b. Robert Feulgen; c. J.D.Watson;
d. Friedrich Miescher.
2. Both father and son together got the Nobel Prize in physics in 1915 for X-ray crystallography; the father was Sir William Henry Bragg; what was the son's name?
a. William Lawrence Bragg; b. William Louis Bragg; c. William Lorenz Bragg; d. William Lewis Bragg.
3. Which is the force with which any two bodies in the universe attract each other?
a. electromagnetic force; b. weak nuclear force;
c. gravitational force; d. strong nuclear force.



1. d. Friedrich Miescher, Swiss biochemist;
2. a. William Lawrence Bragg,
3. c. gravitational force.

Answer: 1. d. Friedrich Miescher, Swiss biochemist;

Shifting Neighbours



Bazheer was a senior official at the court of the Caliph. He built a palatial mansion outside the city. High walls stood all around the property. Tall palms edged the walls. They swayed in the wind. Sentries manned the gates, round the clock. An army of gardeners kept the lawn spotlessly clean and green. They trimmed the hedges and tended the flowering plants with care. The large pool behind the house had reflections of the house and the garden and also the sky. Everything was perfect inside the four walls of the huge house. However, Bazheer

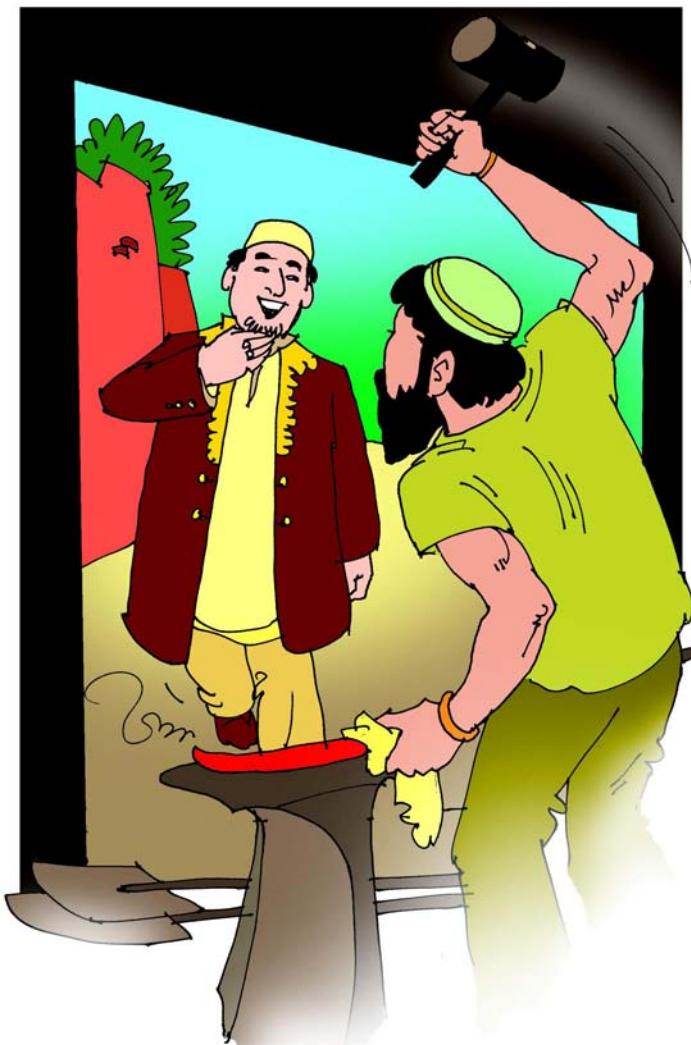
thought the setting could have been better. It was only almost perfect. He wanted to make it cent per cent perfect.

For that he had to get rid of his two neighbours.

Every time he heard the clank of hammer on metal, he scowled. The rattle came from the ramshackle shed that stood on the right side of the outer wall of his mansion. The hut at the rear dovetailed into the shed. Where one ended and the other began, nobody knew. Here worked Ahmed, the ironsmith. He made knives and spades and shovels and sickles and pestles and other tools which the people needed. He had enough work to keep him going. He worked from morning till dusk. His income was modest. But his needs, too, were modest. So, he was always happy. He hummed merry tunes, whistled while iron rubbed on the whetstone and produced sparks. His hut and shed had been raised long before Bazheer's mansion was built. He did not mind the mansion overlooking his hut. He lived his life with his wife and children. When his clients asked him how he felt, now that he had a rich neighbour, he replied, "Allah be pleased. He lives. I live mine. There's room for all of us on this Earth."

But Bazheer thought otherwise. 'This man makes my life miserable. He goes on producing loud sounds. How I wish I could make him shift! And also Hamid,' Bazheer told himself.

Hamid, a carpenter was his other neighbour. He lived in a thatched hut, with stonewalls. It stood to the left of Bazheer's house. Hamid, too, had been around the place for decades. He was hardworking. He made doors and windows and rafts and boats and wooden toys. He did a good job. He never overcharged. So his hands were always full. He had a good voice and loved to sing while he worked. He chipped off wood with the help of chisel and hammer. The sounds every time the hammer hit the



chisel were loud. But the sounds were music to Hamid's ears.

Not so to Bazheer. He became angry every time he heard the rattles and the thuds that came from both sides of his house.

How could he get rid of these noisy neighbours? He thought for long. Finally, he decided to meet them and offer them compensation if only they shifted their places of work.

He first met Ahmed. He stood up and welcomed him. "Salaam alai kum." His voice was friendly.

Bazheer just nodded his head, rather curtly. He did not sit down. He gave the ironsmith a stern stare and said, "Ahmed, suppose I offer you a thousand *Shekels*, would you move your smithy somewhere else?"

"A thousand Shekels! What will I do with that much money?" the poor man wrung his hands.

"Buy a larger plot of land. Build a better house. Buy ornaments and fine clothes for your wife and children. Get your children toys. Send them to the best of schools."

"But I'm quite happy, Saheb. I don't need more money."

"Don't be foolish. Think about my offer. I'm making a similar offer to Hamid, too," Bazheer grinned.

"Why?" Ahmed asked.

"Because you both are my neighbours. I want to be a good neighbour. I want my neighbours to lead better lives."

"If we shift, we will no longer be your neighbours," Ahmed laughed.

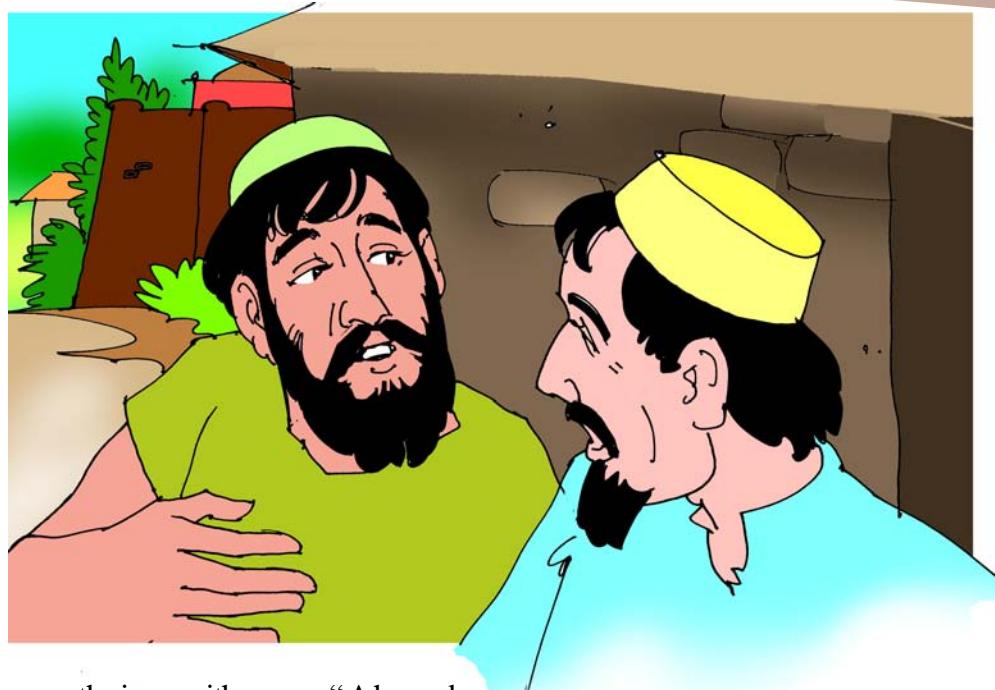
Bazheer waved his hand causally and walked away, after saying, "Let me have your reply by next Friday."

Ahmed watched him leave.

That evening Hamid met Ahmed. "Salaam alai kum." He greeted Ahmed.

"Alai kum salaam," Ahmed gave a warm smile.

The two sat, side by side, on a mat.



"Ahmed, our new neighbour Bazheer says he'll give me one thousand Shekels if I shifted from here."

"He has made a similar offer to me," replied Ahmed.

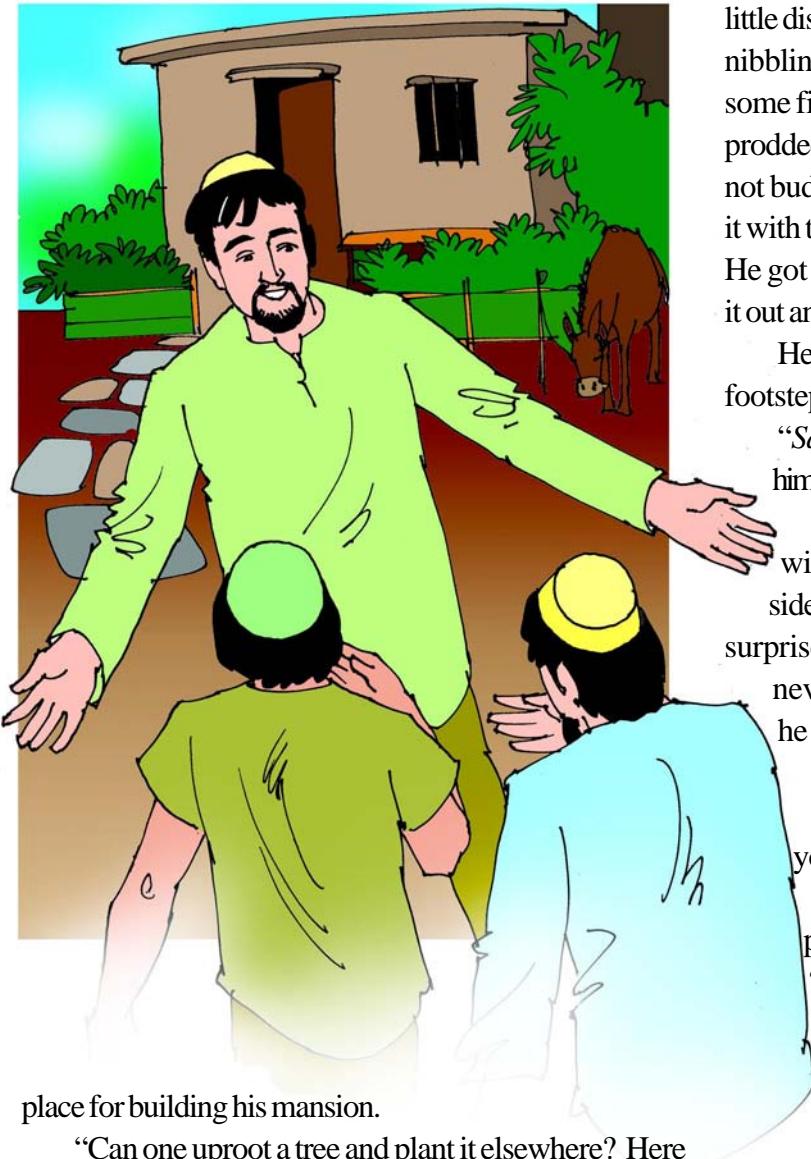
"Why should we move? We were born here. It's here that our parents worked. Here they lived all their lives. Some day our children will work here. Bazheer may be rich. But he was the last to set up home here. If someone has to leave, it is Bazheer. The rule says that one who comes last leaves first, if at all someone has to go," Hamid scowled.

"But he is an official at the Caliph's court. He has muscle power. He may throw us out, forcibly," said Ahmed.

"The Caliph won't let him do that. The Caliph is noble, kind. He never lets the poor be treated badly," Hamid sounded hopeful.

"I hope so," Ahmed mooed. "But suppose Bazheer brings his men and forces us out?"

Hamid's face turned pale. Bazheer was powerful enough to do that. And, how the Caliph would react nobody knew for sure. He might say that since Bazheer offered fair prices for their homes, they should take the money and move out. The Caliph won't know how deeply attached they were to the locality where they had their homes long long before his official Bazheer chose the



place for building his mansion.

“Can one uproot a tree and plant it elsewhere? Here we’ve our roots. Anywhere else we’ll wilt and die.” Hamid’s voice choked with pain.

“How then do we escape the danger?” Ahmed’s forehead formed furrows.

“Who’ll show us a way out?” Hamid scratched his head.

For some time, neither said a word. They tried to find out who could help them out.

“I think we should seek the help of Mulla Nasruddin,” Hamid broke the silence after a long period of silence.

“You said it. Mulla Nasruddin is the man for the job,” agreed Ahmed.

Early next morning, Nasruddin was standing close to the hedge that ringed his house. His donkey stood a

little distance away, tied to a stake driven into the ground, nibbling at the grass. The Mulla was trying to get rid of some fibrous material stuck in his teeth. He pushed and prodded with a toothpick. But the fibrous matter would not budge. Nasruddin refused to give up. He worked at it with total concentration. His efforts finally succeeded. He got the irksome object out of its safe nook. He spat it out and felt immensely happy.

He decided to get back to the house when he heard footsteps. He turned and noticed Hamid and Ahmed.

“*Salaam alai kum*, Mulla Nasruddin,” they greeted him.

“*Alai kum salaam*,” Nasruddin greeted them with warmth, led them to an old cot that lay on one side, made them sit down and asked them, “This is a surprise. How come you are here in the morning? You never leave your work spot during the day. So . . .” he paused.

“We need your help,” Hamid said.

“Pray, tell me how I can help. I shall do whatever you want, gladly,” Nasruddin replied.

Ahmed and Hamid took turns to explain their problem. After listening to them, the Mulla sighed, “But Bazheer is a favourite of the Caliph.”

“We know that. That’s what worries us. Bazheer may have his way. He may force us out.” Both Hamid and Ahmed spoke together.

“Not when I’m around,” Nasruddin sat with them and told them to repeat every word they had exchanged with Bazheer.

“Ah,” Nasruddin broke in, his eyes sparkling. “I think I know what could be done. Bazheer didn’t want you sell your homes to him?”

“No. He only wanted us to shift.”

“Shift you will. Go and collect a thousand Shekels each from Bazheer. Tel him you will shift,” Nasruddin told them.

“But we don’t want to leave the locality. Our clients live in and around the place. They know our work. We don’t want to move,” both of them protested.

“Who is asking you to shift?” Nasruddin drew them closer and whispered in their ears his grand plan. They

could not believe their ears. They danced with joy. "You're a genius," said Hamid.

"You've real brains," added Ahmed.

"I won't be left with much brains if people like you pick my brains, almost every day," Nasruddin joked.

"The brain, the more it is picked, the sharper it becomes," Hamid said with a smile.

"Don't I know?" Nasruddin laughed.

The three friends spent some time, enjoying each other's company, joking and laughing. Finally, Hamid and Ahmed left.

In the evening, Hamid and Ahmed appeared before Bazheer.

"What have you decided?" Bazheer asked.

"We agree. Give us what you promised," said Ahmed.

Bazheer could not believe his ears. He paid them the money. He made them sign a set of documents. He also signed them. The documents read: Hamid and Ahmed agree to shift from their present homes and work spots for a payment of 1,000 Shekels each by Bazheer." Bazheer kept one set of documents with him, gave Hamid and Ahmed a set each.

Bazheer was taken aback when he heard the irksome sounds next morning. He screamed at his servants, "Go and fetch Hamid and Ahmed right away!" The servants hurried out instantly. Some time later, both Hamid and Ahmed turned up before him.

"You cheats! You took money from me, signed documents that say you would shift. But you have not moved out. I shall take you both before the Caliph, and ask him to send you to jail."

"What for?" they asked with a look of curiosity.

"For going back on our agreement."



"Who says we have gone back on what we agreed? We're honest hardworking men, Huzoor. We've already shifted," said both.

"Shifted?"

"Yes. I shifted to Hamid's place. He has moved into my hut," said Ahmed, as he walked off with Hamid on tow, leaving Bazheer dazed.

- **R.K.Murthi**

DID YOU KNOW?

Bats hang upside down while resting because their leg bones are too thin to support the weight of their bodies. Bats that are grounded drag their bodies along the floor to avoid putting weight on their legs. When they hang downwards from their perch, the weight is taken off their legs and the load is borne effortlessly by stretched muscles and tendons.





Shanklin

THE CAP THAT WHISPERS

Vaidya was a renowned doctor in a village. Aditya, a young man, was working for him as an assistant. Mayavi, a magician, was also living in the same village. He used to delight the villagers with his feats. Aditya, now tired of being a mere assistant to a doctor, thought how he could become prosperous by learning magic from Mayavi. So, he approached him and requested him to accept him as his disciple. But Mayavi refused to oblige him. "I can share my magical talents only with a deserving man and certainly not you!" Aditya was very much disappointed.

After a few days, Mayavi went to Vaidya for treatment. After examining him, Vaidya said, "I shall give you medicine today. I want to see how it works on you. Come again tomorrow! I'll give you the same medicine if I find you are responding."

Mayavi replied, "Doctor, I'm afraid I won't be able to walk this distance again, so I'll send the report to you and you may send the medicine through somebody." Aditya, who was eagerly looking for an opportunity to befriend Mayavi, readily agreed to go to his house the next day, find out his condition and report back to the

doctor. He also agreed to take the medicine to his house. After being of service to Mayavi, he renewed his request to him.

The magician said, "I don't think I'll live long. I'm afraid my magical powers would die with me. I would like to pass on my powers to someone worthy of them."

At once, Aditya sprang with delight and requested him to teach him magic. But the magician declined. "You aren't capable of learning them. All I can do is to pass on only one of them to you right now." He then gave him a cap and said, "Son, this is a magic cap! You can wear it! After my death, I'll dwell in this cap for sometime! If you put this cap on a man's head, I'll whisper something in your ears about the man wearing the cap. It will be beneficial to him and he might reward you. Use this cap only once a day. After a few years, I would leave the cap for ever."

Mayavi died the very next day. His funeral rites were performed by Aditya along with other villagers. Afterwards he left the village and went to another village. One day, when Aditya was walking on the road with the cap on his head, there was suddenly a vibration inside the cap.

Someone whispered in his ears. "Aditya, I'm Mayavi! Do you see a man coming in front of you? His name is Nandu. Tell him that you can predict what would happen to him. I'll tell you that. It would prove to be correct and he would reward you." Immediately, Aditya accosted him and said, "Nandu! I can predict something good for you today provided you gave me Rs200."

The man was surprised to find a total stranger to his village who could call him by his name. He immediately agreed to his proposal. Aditya then put the cap on Nandu's head. At once, Mayavi's voice whispered in his ears, "He has loaned Rs1,000 to his friend long back, which he thought would never be recovered. Let him go to his friend today and he is sure to get back his money." Aditya repeated all that to Nandu. Both went to the friend's house.

His friend, on seeing them exclaimed, "I wanted to return that loan to you today. It's good that you've yourself come." He paid the money with interest of Rs200. Nandu was overjoyed and promptly rewarded Aditya for his prediction. Soon the news spread and people started flocking to Aditya to know their fortunes. Aditya, however, used his magic cap only once a day as instructed by Mayavi.

After a year or so, Aditya heard Mayavi whispering to him. "I could help many people with your help and I have made you too

prosperous. Now my soul would rest in peace and hence I would like to go to my heavenly abode. From to day, my services will not be available to you. Good bye!"

Aditya was about to return to his village when the king called for him and said, "Listen! I would like to avail of your services today. I'm extremely fond of the princess Vidhya, the young daughter of the King of Malwa. But the king is not willing to give his daughter in marriage to me. So I've decided to take the princess by force. I have in my possession a magical sword. Tell me whether my wish would be fulfilled."

Aditya decided to face the situation boldly and put the cap on the head of the king. Instantly, the sword fell down and the king's hand was totally paralysed. The king became panicky and shouted, "What happened to me, Aditya?"

Suddenly, Aditya could hear Mayavi's whisper. "Aditya, seeing your predicament, I've come to your rescue. Tell the king that he should give up his evil intention, to slay the king. His paralysed hand would become normal." Aditya thanked Mayavi and repeated to the king whatever he heard.

The king immediately declared, "I hereby give up my plan to slay the king." He became normal at once. He rewarded Aditya with a number of gifts and allowed him to go back to his native village.





Early to rise, Early to bed, Makes a man healthy but socially dead.

-The Warner Brothers (Animaniacs)

"Now, Johnny," said the teacher, "if the phone were to ring in the middle of the night at your house, what would it mean?"

"The bill is paid."



LAUGH TILL YOU DROP!

"I did my good deed for today, Mom. I put a tack on the teacher's chair."

She was horrified. "You consider that a good deed?" she scolded him.

"Sure. Everybody in the class hates him."

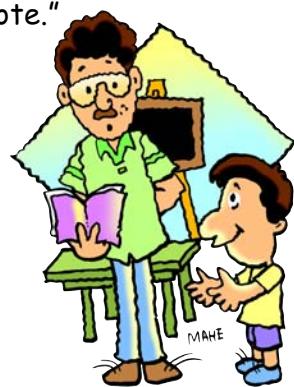


Little Tommy knelt at his bed to say his prayer. Mother, waiting in the hallway, called, "I can't hear you."

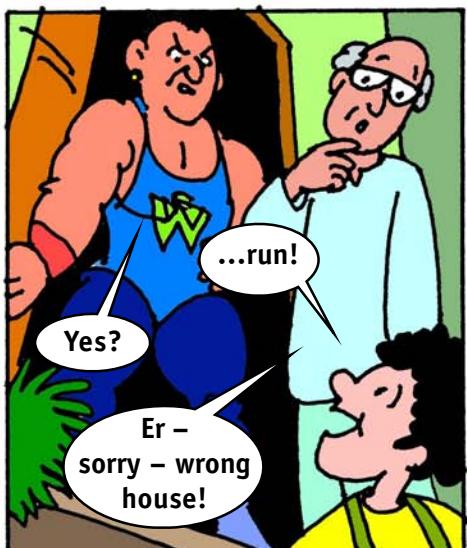
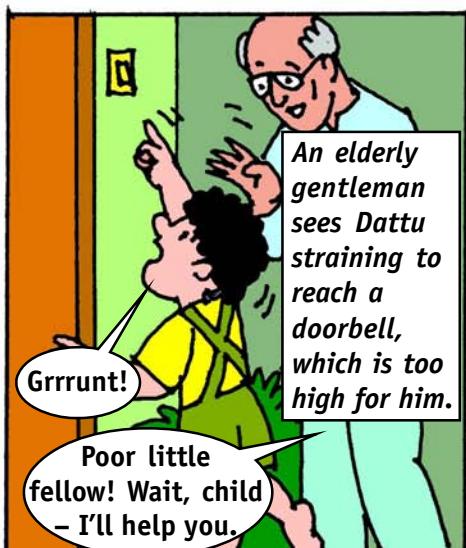
"Sorry, Mom," said little Tommy. "But I wasn't speaking to you."

"An anecdote is a tale," said the teacher. "Now, Rakesh, use it in a sentence."

"I tied a tin can to the dog's anecdote."



DUSHTU DATTU





SOARING FASTER AND HIGHER

The brave young test pilot now dreamed of flying to the highest altitude that none had ever been before. Indeed, he was a man of superb skill and icy nerves and had many thrilling adventures in the cockpit. He was Frank K. Everest, born in August 1920 in Fairmont, West Virginia. After a course in engineering, he looked for a career in flying. Before long, he graduated as a pilot in the Air Force and received his commission in July 1942. Two years later he was sent to a fighter squadron. In 1945 the

experienced and courageous pilot destroyed four Japanese aircraft before his plane was shot down by ground fire. He parachuted to safety, but inside the enemy territory, and remained a Japanese prisoner of war till the end of the conflict.

Then in 1946 Major Frank Everest

was assigned to the Flight Test Division and was trained as a test pilot. He was required to fly new aircraft and evaluate their performance by putting them through all sorts of tests. An expert pilot should be able to execute this work without wrecking the plane and without getting himself killed in the process. It was indeed a risky and challenging job. Being a highly experienced flyer, Frank was given a number of top priority projects. One such project was high altitude flights in the Bell X-1 aircraft. Will the daring adventurer be able to fulfil his dream and establish the World Altitude record?

Several weeks of preparations went by. The ace pilot stood looking intently at the new flying machine. Major Everest had a knack for making himself at home in any cockpit. He knew his plane minutely and could well ascertain what was happening in it during the flight. Man and machine were now ready for the great venture. The X-1 plane was to be carried slung under the belly of a giant B-29 bomber. Then at a specified altitude, the parent plane would release it in the air.

So the massive bomber escorted by jet-fighters took off into the early morning sky of August 8,



1949. Major Everest put on the pressure-suit. Then adjusting the helmet on his head he stepped into the lift which slowly lowered him down through the bomb-doors into the hanging X-1. There lay 7,000ft of empty space between him and the ground below. When he reached the cockpit of the hanging plane he carefully wriggled into it through its tiny doorway.

The major then plugged on his oxygen mask and the pressure suit's radio connections to the appropriate points in the cramped cabin. "I'm now ready!" he finally told the commander of the bomber. The cockpit cover quickly closed over him and made the plane airtight. He felt as if he was in another planet, completely shut off from every living thing on earth. The B-29 now climbed to 30,000 feet and then gradually dived down. Loud and clear was the pilot's voice: "Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one! Now drop off!" The plane X-1 dropped away from its parent craft.

Like a flash of lightning the rocket aircraft surged across the sky. The test pilot was violently pushed against the back as if a giant had suddenly sat on

his chest. Gasping for breath Major Everest turned the nose of the plane towards the heavens. At 50,000ft, the mach-meter displayed nine-tenths the speed of sound. Indeed, he was fast approaching the sound barrier.

Again and again the aircraft shook and shuddered and vibrated violently. The screeching sound as it sliced across the atmosphere had now risen to a crescendo. It gave a feeling that the plane will break to pieces. Will it hold together till the end?

Then, suddenly and mysteriously, there was pin drop silence. Where did all the commotion disappear? The cockpit, too, was silent except for the very quiet shaking of the engines. The needle of the mach-meter had taken a leap forward. Major Frank Everest and his X-1 rocket plane were now travelling at supersonic speed. No doubt everything around was still and soundless! For the noise of the flight was left behind and could not move fast enough to catch them. The test pilot now changed the direction of the plane and they shot up like a meteor towards the sky.

All of a sudden there was an explosion! 'What was that?' wondered Everest. At the same instant his pressure suit blew up and firmly held his limbs and body. He could hardly move nor could he breathe with ease. What had gone wrong? Then to his horror

he saw a big crack in the canopy. It must have been a tiny chink at first which had gradually widened and split open, sucking the air out of the cockpit. Had he not worn the pressure suit, at this altitude of almost 68,000 ft, his blood would have boiled like a vessel of water.

He was now frantically struggling against the iron clasp of the pressure suit. He managed to switch off the engines and almost wrestled with the controls, trying to stop the plane from its ascent. Luckily the aircraft, still moving at the speed of sound, turned over and began to descend towards the earth.

'What's the matter? Are you all right?' asked a pilot of one of the escorting planes. He was bewildered, seeing this sudden change of direction after the fantastic climb.

But Frank Everest, though he heard his friend, could not answer. How could he when the pressure suit held him tightly and securely like a big hugging bear? He could scarcely move his lungs nor could he utter a single word.

The two escort pilots who were all this while circling below watched in great despair the plane falling down like a small boulder from the sky. 'Was this the end of X-1? Was this the heroic Major's last flight?' they sadly wondered.

But Frank Everest was calm. He was making a



supreme effort to fight the vice-like grip of the pressure suit. With nerves of steel he kept his hands steady on the controls. He knew that the slightest hesitation at this moment would mean sheer disaster. The plane would then simply throw itself about in the skies like a mad cow and smash itself to pieces on the sound barrier. Finally, at 20,000 ft, he managed to release the valves of the pressure suit. That gave him great relief. Then pumping out the heavy fuel that was no longer required, he managed to land his plane safely on the desert below.

Major Frank K. Everest had piloted the famous Bell X-1 to a peak altitude of 71,902 ft. He became the first pilot to have his life saved by the pressure suit. Later he flew to a number of speed and altitude records and was known at one time as "The Fastest Man on Earth" as well as the highest flier. - A.K.D.

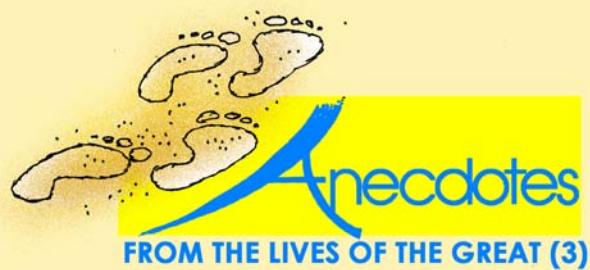


GOLF IN HEAVEN

A cleric found himself wondering whether there were any golf courses in Heaven. He even began to ask the question in his prayers. One day, in answer to his prayers, he received a direct answer from on high.
"Yes," said the Heavenly messenger, "There are many excellent golf courses in Heaven. The greens are always in first class condition, the weather is always perfect and you always get to play with the very nicest people."

"Oh, thank you," said the cleric, "that really is marvellous news."

"Yes, isn't it?" replied the messenger. "And we've got you down for a foursome next Saturday."



THE ROYAL ROAD TO CONQUERING AN ENEMY



King Phillip of Macedonia (382 – 332 B.C.) is generally remembered as the father of Alexander the Great. On one hand he was the most powerful among all the Greek kings of his time and on the other, he is very fond of learning. The fact that he appointed the great philosopher Aristotle as his son's teacher was proof enough of his love for knowledge.

In a corner of his kingdom there lived a small landlord named Archedias who used to criticize King Phillip bitterly. This habit of his was reported to the king not once but several times and by so many of his officers, spies and noblemen. All of them described the man as inimical to the king.

Once the king was camping in the district where Archedias lived. He summoned Archedias. "I shall put an end to my enemy," he declared in the presence of his companions and officers.

"That should be in the fitness of things," they all agreed.

"Right. I intend to finish off my enemy." The king appeared to have made up his mind.

Archedias had no way of escape. He went with the royal messengers and presented himself before the king. While leaving home, Archedias had taken a tearful farewell of his family. Though he was not so sure whether he would be killed, there was no doubt left in anybody's mind that he would be severely punished; he might rot in a prison for the rest of his life.

The man was ushered into the king's presence. The king asked everybody else to leave the room. But his bodyguards were waiting outside, ready to drag the king's enemy to his doom at a signal from their master.

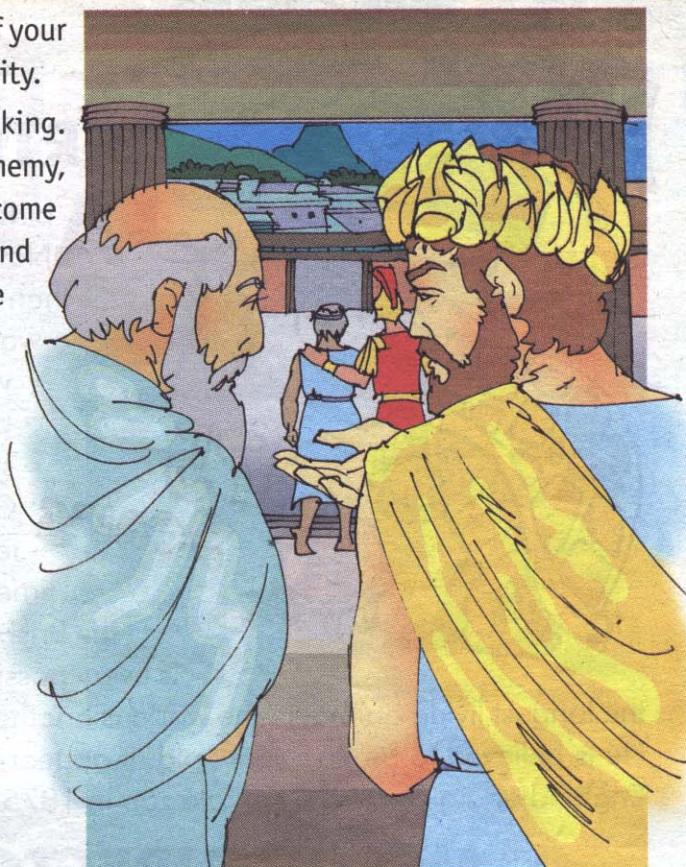
An hour later, to the surprise of everybody, King Phillip and Archedias came out together, talking and laughing like old friends. The king asked some of his officers to escort the gentleman to his house, along with a lot of gifts.

"What's this, my lord? Didn't you resolve to finish off your enemy?" asked a nobleman, unable to control his curiosity.

"Of course, I did finish off my enemy!" replied the king. "You'll soon find out that I've not only finished off an enemy, but gained a friend. Archedias is a good man. He had become hostile towards me, partly because of false rumours and partly because of some of my actions. I dispelled the rumours, explained my actions and also admitted the mistakes I had made. With an understanding of the situation, an enemy of mine within him disappeared; the same understanding also cultivated in him goodwill for me. He understood that as a king I had to do certain things which could appear bad, but which were necessary."

The king laughed and said in conclusion, "Killing an enemy only creates new enemies. Changing an enemy into a friend not only creates new friends, but ensures peace."

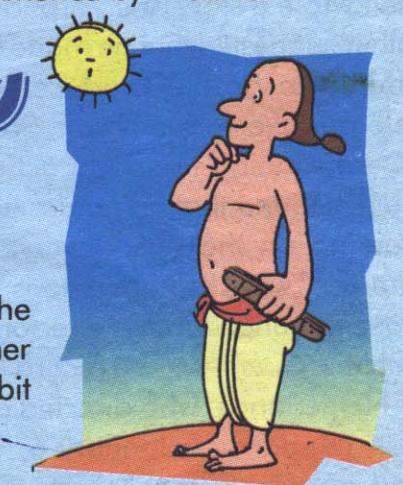
Thus, though Phillip was a king, he showed that the truly royal way to conquer an enemy was not to exhibit crude power, but the power of understanding and sympathy. (M.D.)

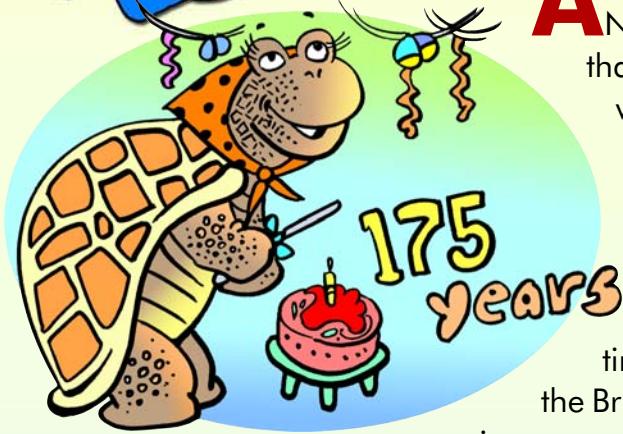


Although modern images and descriptions of India often show poverty, India was one of the richest countries till the advent of the British in the early 17th century. Christopher Columbus was attracted by India's wealth and was looking for a route to India when he discovered America by mistake.

DID YOU KNOW?

Bhaskaracharya had rightly calculated the time taken by the earth to orbit the sun hundreds of years before the astronomer Smart. His calculation was—the time taken by earth to orbit the sun: (5th century) 365.258756484 days.





BIRTHDAY PARTY IN ZOO

A birthday party was held in Australia Zoo in Brisbane on November 15 last. The 'birthday girl' was none other than Harriet the tortoise who turned 175 that day. She was given a treat—a pink hibiscus flower cake. Her visitors that day also got a helping of the cake. Harriet became a celebrity from the day Charles Darwin the scientist discovered her in 1835 in the Giant Galapagos island, which is known for its giant-sized tortoises. Harriet had to change homes quite a few times. For the past 17 years, she has been an inmate of the Brisbane Zoo. According to her keeper, Steve Irwin, there is every possibility of her living for another 25 years. Incidentally, the longest living animal in the world is another tortoise—Adwaitya-1 in the Alipore Zoo in Kolkata. He is believed to be 255 years old. It appears Governor General Lord Clive had brought it from England and given to the Kolkata zoo in 1875.

MOVIE DIRECTOR A 9-YEAR-OLD

Not long ago, 9-year-old Kishan faced the camera in as many as 24 Kannada movies and for 1,000 episodes in five mega TV serials. He has now turned a director and is often seen behind the camera. His first directorial venture in Kannada is *C/o footpath*, which is being got ready for release in April this year. He learnt the tricks on the sets from his own directors and by persuading the cameramen to teach him the art. One day, he happened to see children on the streets selling newspapers and knick-knacks. His father told him they were orphans. He then wrote a story of an orphan boy keen to go to school. His father suggested that he made it into a movie, while his mother offered to be the producer. Kishan succeeded in getting veterans like Jackie Shroff, Sourab Shukla, and the national award-winning Kannada actress, Thaara, to act in his film. He has found that his tender age is no problem with all those working on the sets. "Everybody treats me like any other director," says Kishan, who is expecting to be recognised as world's youngest movie director. The related papers are already with the Guinness. The record is currently held by Sydney Ling of Netherlands, who directed a feature film in 1973 when he was 13. Born on January 6, 1996, Kishan is also a singer and a music composer. His first music album sold 15,000 copies.



KALEIDOSCOPE



MAHE

THE JOY OF SEASONS

Seasons pass by and by
Spreading a colour of joy in the sky.
The four seasons of the year
Spread their fun with no fear.
Summer comes first
Some people think it's the worst.
For us children they are the best days
Why? Because of summer holidays!
Autumn brings monsoon showers
They help to grow a lot of flowers.
Winter brings frost and snow
And with it brings a joyous glow.

Chandamama

RAIN

O! dear rain
Pitter patter, pitter patter
Go your drops of water
On all the matter.

O! dear rain
When you come
We become weary
And succumb to your fury.

O! dear rain
When you are out, we are in
When you are in, we are out
For the fear of being hurt.

O! dear rain
With you accompany
Thunder whom we shudder
Lightning quite frightening.

O! dear rain
You are a necessity
Not an adversity.

*Bhavana Kishore
Baglodi (9), Sharjah*



Spring is wonderful
It makes nature even more beautiful.
Birds sing and flap their wings
Spring fills every heart with splendid things.

- Tanisha Nag (12), New Delhi

March 22 every year is observed as World Water Day. There are two significant aspects to the observance of the day. One, the sources of water are fast getting depleted. In fact, the people concerned are even fearing that in another fifty years, the earth would remain feeling thirsty! Second, whatever precious water is available now is getting contaminated thanks to certain careless activities of human beings. What is needed right now is : Stop polluting water and save as much water as possible for the generations to follow. Seven year old Krishna Reddy (Irvine, USA) touches some of these points and we found his piece very topical.

-Editor

A FRIENDLY ADVICE

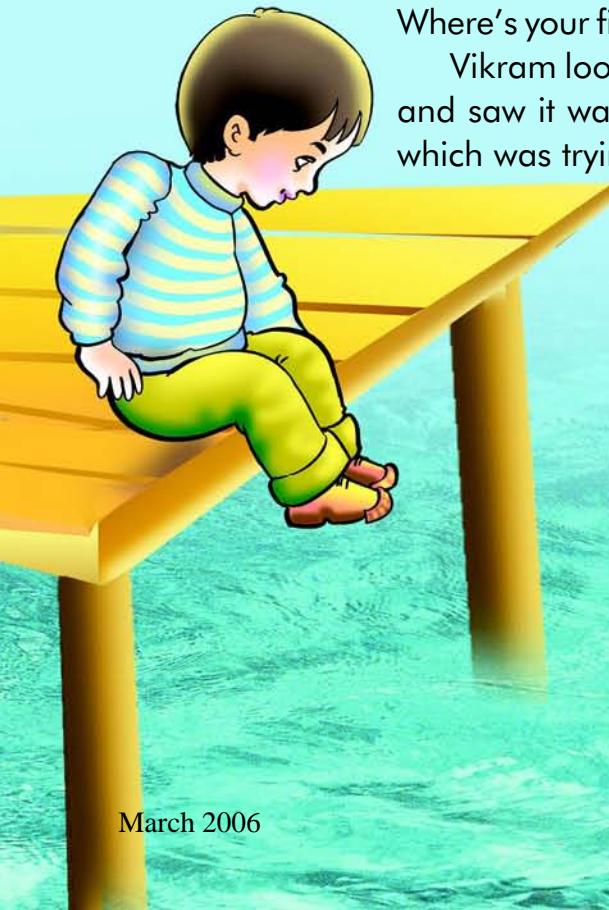
Vikram sat on the edge of the jetty watching the fish, both big and small, swimming this way and that, jumping up to the surface to catch some air and then diving back into the water. He wondered how the fish could do all that non-stop. How he wished he could make friends with them. Suddenly, he heard someone calling out to him: "Hey, little child, we've been seeing you here for some days always lost in thoughts. What's your name? Where's your fishing rod?"

Vikram looked around and saw it was a dolphin which was trying to speak

to him. "I'm Vikram. My friends call me Vicky. They do not play with me anymore," he said, almost sobbing.

"Why? What happened?" asked the dolphin now in a more friendly tone.

"We used to have a lot of fun at the little pond over there, playing with soap bubbles. We would have a contest: Who would make the biggest bubble? We did not know that the bubbles we made from liquid soap and chemicals were harming life in the pond, I mean the plants around, their flowers and the fish which had made the pond their home. Our parents came to know about it. When they were told that I was their leader, they asked my friends to stop playing with me. My parents do not allow me to bring my fishing



rod here. Tell me, what else can I do here, except watching the fish having all fun?"

"Yes, Vicky, the chemicals used in soaps and detergents easily pollute water, especially the water in ponds, as there is no flow to wash away the dirt," said the dolphin.

"I'm really sorry, my friend. I didn't know all this."

"We speak of ponds and rivers," said the dolphin. "Think of the big seas and even oceans. They get spoiled by men and machines. Haven't you heard of oil-spills from ocean-liners? What about men throwing litter into the ocean? They're all harmful to us, fish."

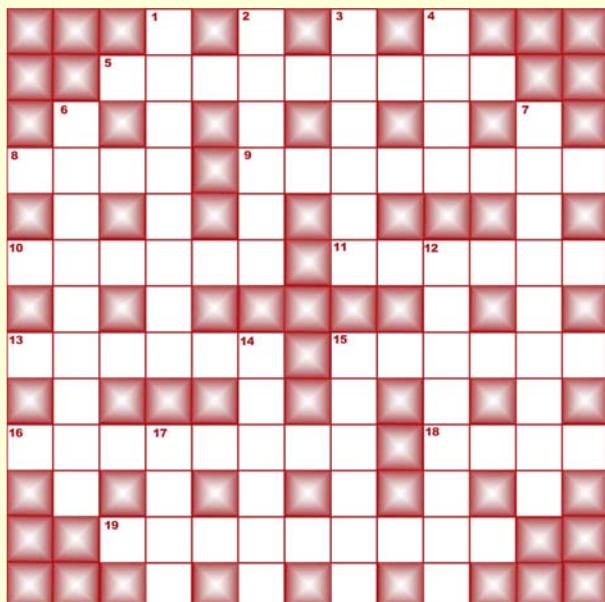
"I wish we had known all this earlier. We would have been careful when we played in the pond," said Vikram. "Now, what shall I do?" said Vikram, heaving a sigh.

"It's simple, Vicky," advised the dolphin. "First you go and say sorry to your parents and then apologise to your friends' parents and assure them that you and your friends won't pollute the pond."

"Thank you, my friend, I shall straight away do that," said Vikram, now putting on a smile.

"Come back here with your friends. They'll be happy to befriend us, fishes. You all can form a group to prevent people from polluting water wherever it is. Call yourself Green Friends! Bye!" The next moment the friendly dolphin disappeared.

CROSSWORD



CLUES

ACROSS:

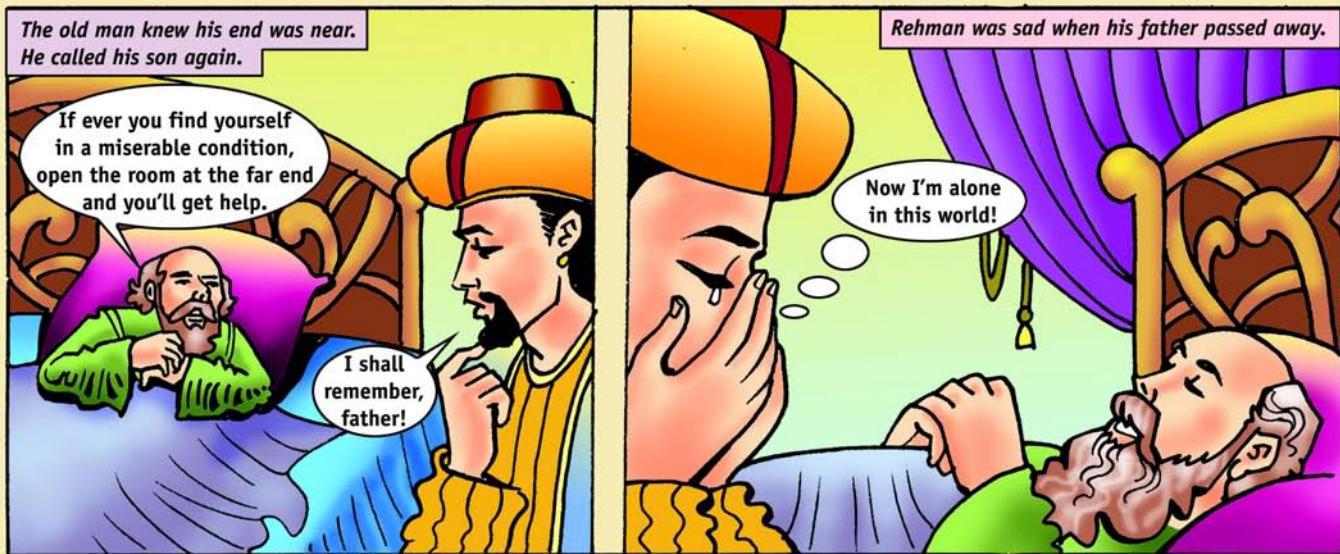
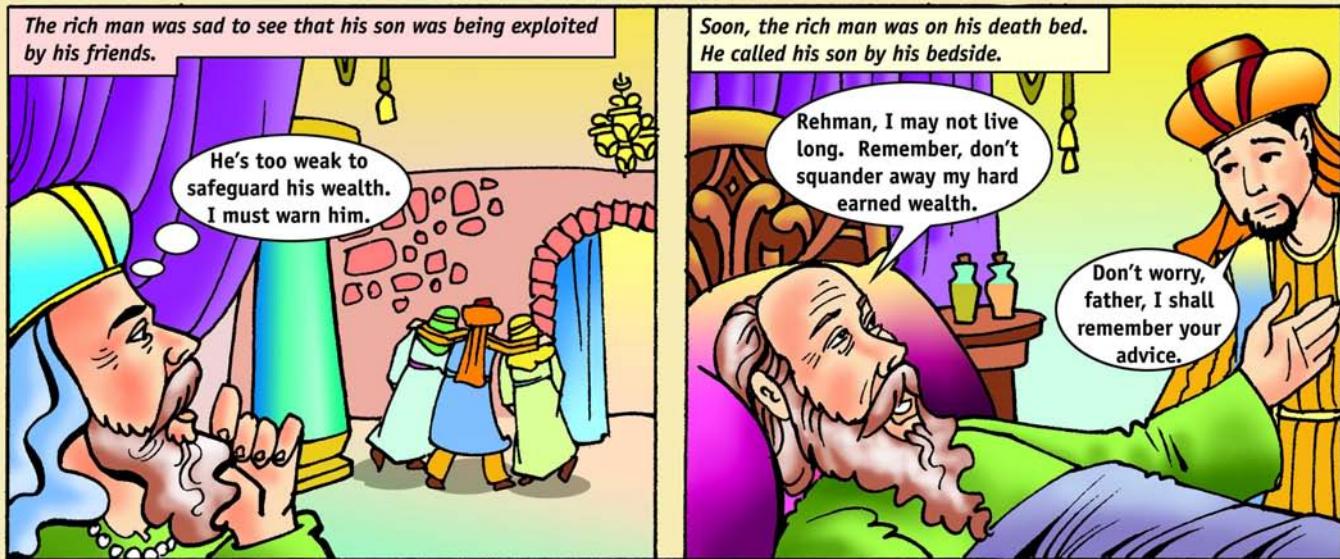
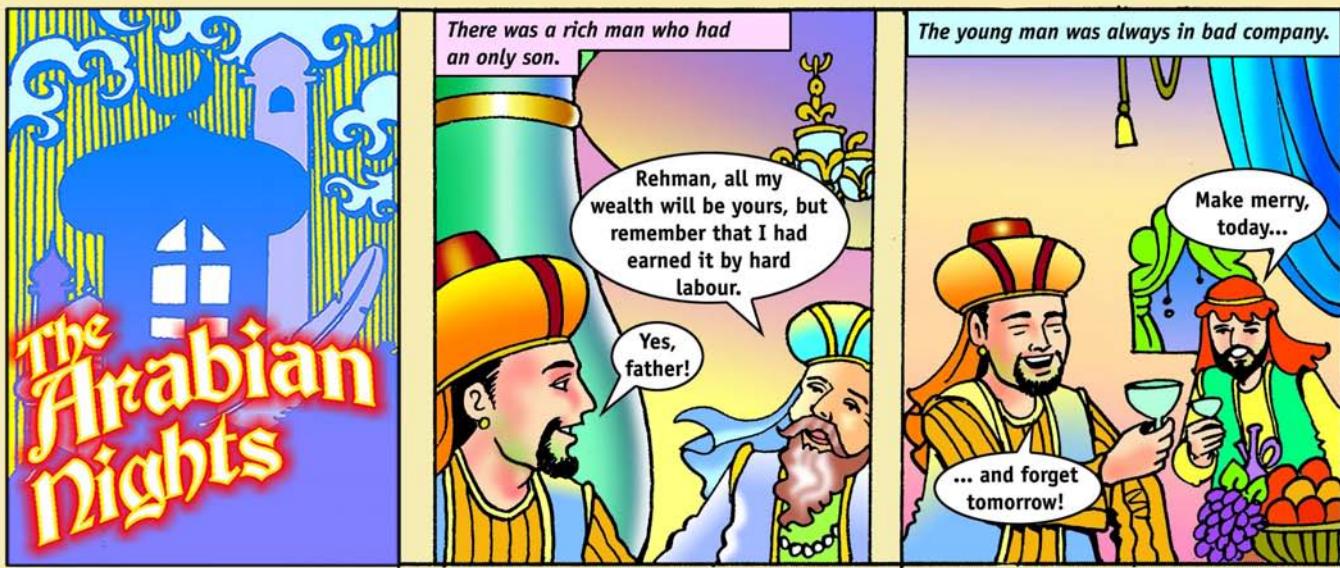
- He offered the people of Britain "nothing but blood, toil, tears and sweat" (9)
- Island in the West Pacific (4)
- Equips in advance (8)
- Thoroughfare (6)
- Spanish word for man (6)
- A kind of painting on wall (6)
- A case for headgear storage (6)
- Old-fashioned clothes presser (8)
- A way of greeting (4)
- Where items for auction are displayed (9)

DOWN:

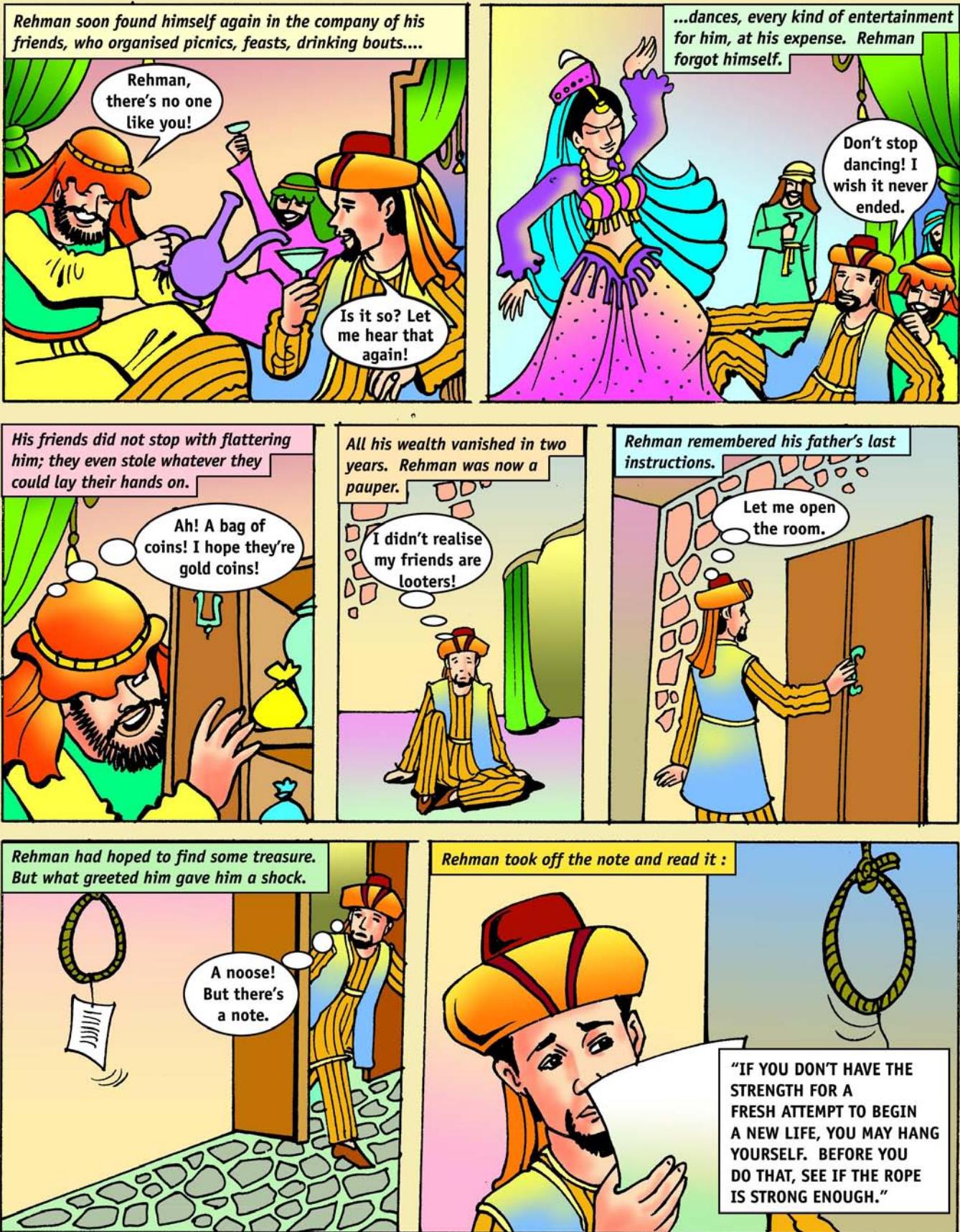
- A room for judges/Speaker (8)
- A gain from business (6)
- A house of worship (6)
- Arm bone (4)
- A stroke in swimming (9)
- Early stages of development (9)
- Useful to lit a fire (8)
- Surname of Edna, Flann or Vincent (6)
- Craving for food (6)
- Hailing from Bangkok (4)

-A.S. Ranganathan (13), Coimbatore

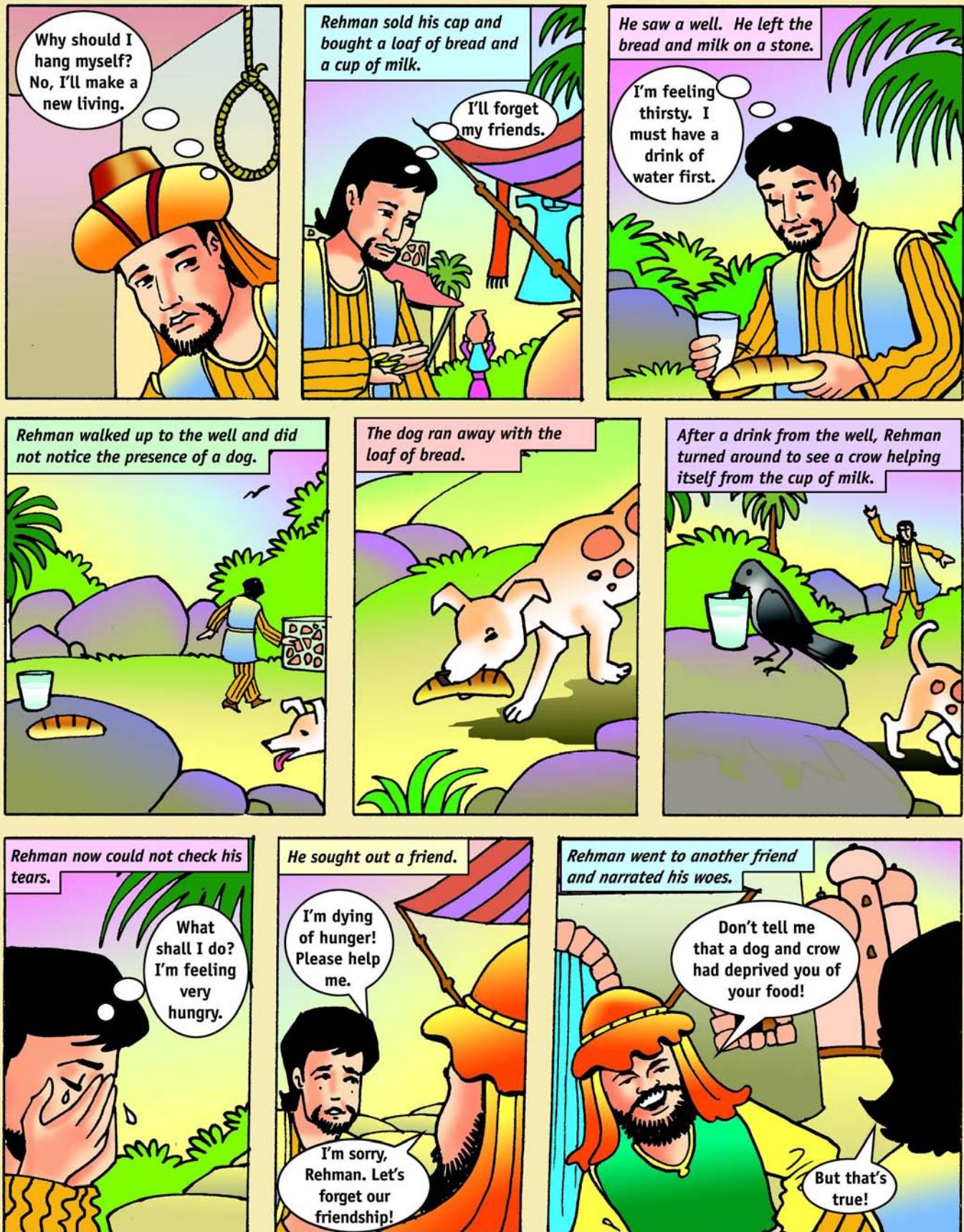
(Solution on page 36)



The Arabian Nights



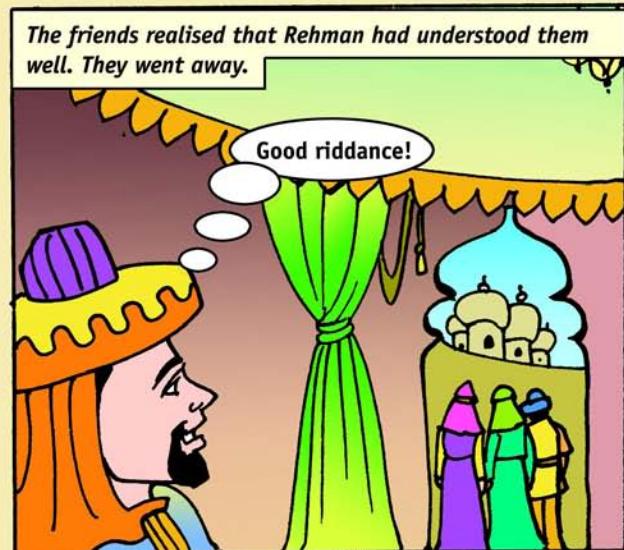
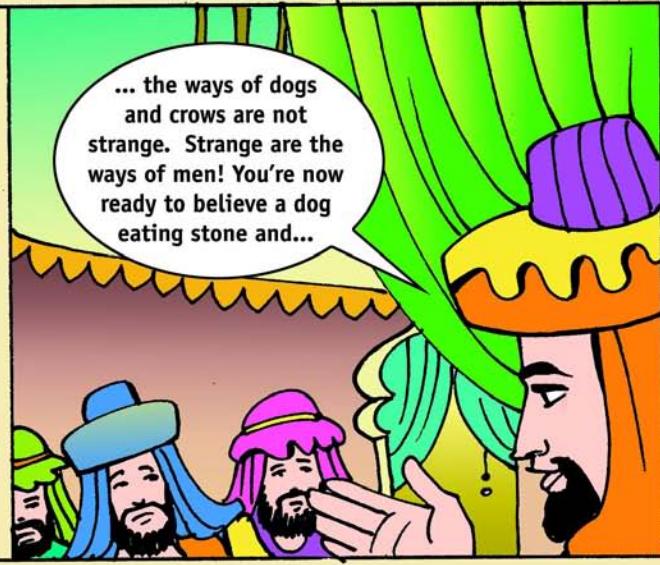
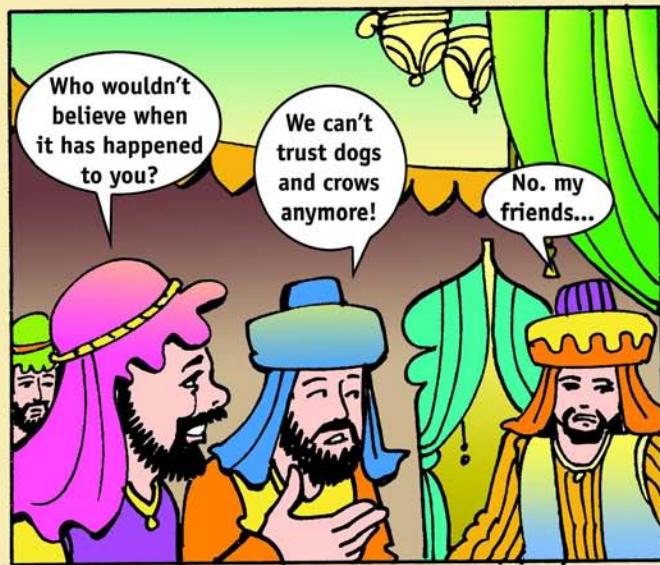
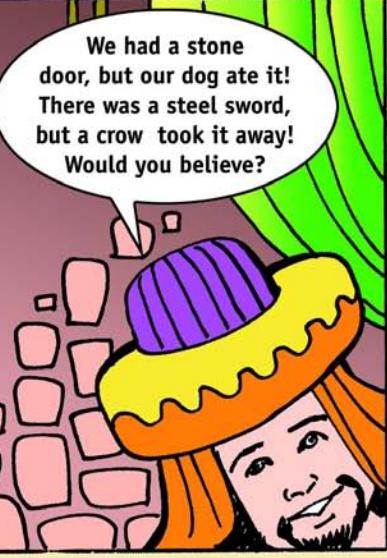
THE LAST RESTOR



The Arabian Nights



THE LAST RESTOR



The End

PRIZE-WINNING 'REACTION'

(Compare with the story that appeared in the respective month)



A CLEVER DEAL (October '05)

On their way back, Pitamber, his wife and daughter found the same boatman on the riverbank. When they approached him, he said he would charge six rupees each to take them across the river. Pitamber protested. "You charged only one rupee per person to bring us here." "True, but this is my usual charges for a return trip," said the boatman, stubbornly.

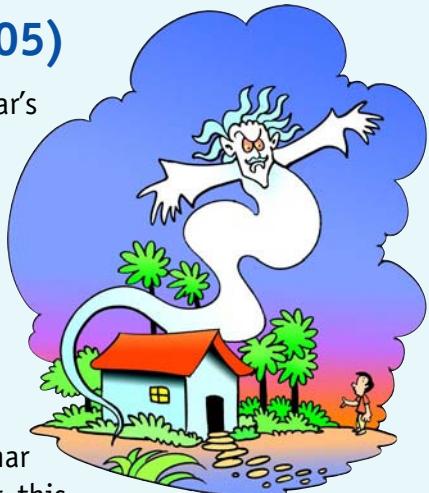
There was no other boat or boatman in sight. In fact, the boatman had this idea when Pitamber first crossed the river. He was left with no option except to pay what the boatman demanded. He could now understand how the boatman was making a profit in the deal.

- *Alok Kumar Jena (14), Mukundapur, Orissa - 761 137.*

A GHOSTLY ADVENTURE (November '05)

It was a moonlit night. Ram stepped out of his house. When Chakradhar's ghost appeared, he shouted, "Hey! Why did you take such a long time to come? I've been looking for you!" Chakradhar was surprised, "This is the first time in my life any man has spoken to me so rudely," he said. Ram firmly said, "You think you're strong? I challenge you." The ghost said, "Stop your chatter! You people are like worms." "Very well, then," said Ram. He picked up a stone. "Can you squeeze water out of this stone?"

Chakradhar's face turned red but not a single drop fell. He gave back the stone to Ram, who slipped an egg into his left hand and pressed it with the stone. There was a cracking sound and a liquid flowed out. Chakradhar was shocked. He humbly said, "I'm no match for you. I concede that this house is yours!" Ram lived peacefully thereafter.



- *Vibhor Bhatnagar (14), Mumbai - 400 049.*



THE JESTER'S WISDOM (December '05)

The jester, who knew that the king wanted to laugh at his expense, gently replied, "Your Majesty! As your loyal subject, I want to remind you of your order that each citizen in your kingdom must contribute half of his/her income for the care of his/her pet. I've done my duty. For this reason, my horse is fat and I've grown lean. Your Majesty! Your horse is too lean. I think you haven't taken care of your animal. The king realized that he himself had not followed his own order. The jester thus proved to be wiser than the king, who never again tried to pull his jester's legs.

- *N. Seshadri Bhargava (13), Muthialpet, Pondicherry 605 003.*

THE FLICKERING LIGHT

Anirban was watching his favourite cartoon on the TV, when his cousin Samrat entered the room. "Hello Ani, aren't you studying for your exams?" asked Samrat.

Eleven-year-old Anirban made a face. "Don't remind me of exams, please!" he said.

"Come, let's go for a walk, then. I would like to see your school too," suggested Samrat, who had come on a visit from Bangalore. Samrat was two years older than Anirban, and the two boys were good friends.

Anirban readily agreed. Soon the boys were walking down the street. Anirban pointed out the various landmarks of the town. After about half-an-hour, they came upon St. Cecil's School, which was a huge striking building in red stone. Tall pine trees surrounded the building and the boys stood outside the big iron gates, admiring the view.

"Come, let's go to the market," said Samrat after a

while. The boys started to walk and Samrat, who was a keen football player, began describing the goals he had scored in the last match against a rival school.

It was dark by the time the two boys began to walk back home. As they were passing by the school, Anirban happened to look up in the direction of his classroom in the top left-hand corner. The tree branches partially obstructed his view but what he saw made him come to a standstill. Wasn't that a flickering light he had just seen up there?

"Samrat, isn't that strange? Why should there be a light when there's nobody in the classroom now?"

"Oh, it must have been the guard checking up," replied Samrat. Anirban slowly nodded his head. "Maybe," he shrugged, but was still not fully convinced. He couldn't imagine Hari Ram, the guard, opening up each classroom to check them at night!

At school the next day, Anirban tried to locate the room where he had seen the flickering light. But in the hustle and bustle of a busy day in the school, his thoughts seemed funny and he put it out of his head.

However, while returning home that afternoon, Anirban suddenly realized what had been bothering him about the previous evening's incident. 'If it was Hari Ram, why didn't he simply switch on the light in the classroom? That flickering light means it was either a torch or ... a candle!"

However, Samrat did not find anything strange about it when Anirban confided in him later that evening. "I think you imagined the whole 'light' business, dear fellow. Must be exam tension," he said with a laugh.

"It's really puzzling. Let's check it out, please," pleaded Anirban, and Samrat reluctantly agreed.

However, there was nothing to be seen when the two boys reached the school gates. The entire building was in darkness except for a dim light near the gates. "Let's walk back once again," said Anirban, trying to locate the exact spot from where he had looked upwards.



Samrat, who had been standing watching with his hands in his pockets, started to shake his head.

Just then Anirban gave an excited cry and pointed upwards. "The light! Look, there's it, again."

Samrat rushed to the spot where Anirban was standing. "Yes, it's true. This is very strange indeed!"

"It's a *candle*!" muttered Anirban. "Come, let's find out what's happening." In a trice, the two boys ran towards the wall and began to climb up. Soon, they were running across the field and towards the stairs.

"This way," whispered Anirban and with Samrat following, the two boys climbed up the stairs to the second floor.

"Oh, it's not my classroom. Let me see, the other corner room...yes, must be the Xth standard classroom," said Anirban as he tried to find his way in the darkness.

Anirban and Samrat silently ran through the dark corridors till they came to the room where they could see the flickering light through the glass windows.

The two boys peered through a window and the sight that greeted their eyes almost took their breath away!

There were three men in the room. One person was busy scribbling something on paper, while another man was searching the wooden cupboard that stood at the corner.

"That's Hari," said Anirban as he instantly recognized the guard. "And that's...oh my God, that's Mr. Sharma, the accountant."

Just then the third man, who had been looking through the cupboard, turned and both the boys shivered. The man had a big moustache and there was a knife hanging from his belt.

"Sshhh...I think I know what these men are up to," whispered Samrat. "They're copying the question papers! Leaking exam papers has become a big business nowadays!"

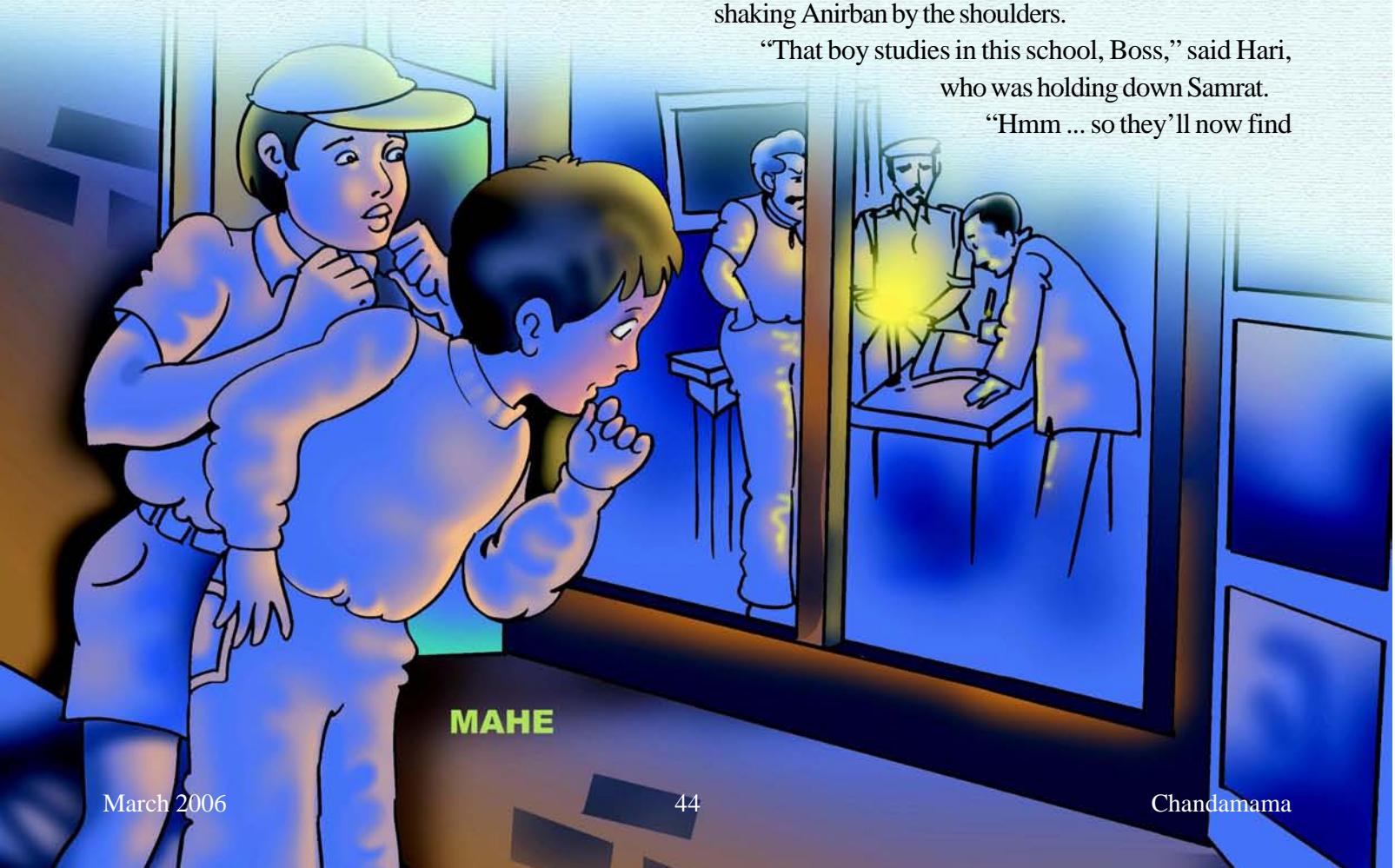
Suddenly to his dismay, Anirban felt a sneeze coming and before he could do anything, it was out. "Accchoo!" The sound rang out loud in the silent building.

"Run!" yelled Samrat. But before the boys could escape, the man with the moustache had pounced on them.

"Ho, ho...so spying on us, were you?" said the man, shaking Anirban by the shoulders.

"That boy studies in this school, Boss," said Hari, who was holding down Samrat.

"Hmm...so they'll now find





The cucumber is not a vegetable; it is a fruit. So are the eggplant, the pumpkin, the squash, the tomato, the gherkin, and the okra. Rhubarb, however, is botanically a vegetable, not a fruit.



out what happens to boys who snoop,” said the man. “Tie them up while we finish our work,” he ordered.

The two boys were dragged roughly inside and tied tight to a chair.

“What are you going to do with the boys?” asked Mr. Sharma, looking pale and scared. Anirban saw that Mr. Sharma’s hands were shaking and felt sorry for the elderly man. He was such a kind and gentle soul; how did he get tied up with criminals?

“We’ll have to take them with us,” said Boss, a cruel gleam in his eyes.

“Now, have you got the papers, Sharma?” he continued impatiently.

“No...I...I think they’re in the Principal’s room,” Mr. Sharma replied slowly.

“Then hurry...go and get it! You have the keys, don’t you? Meet us at the side gate. We’ll be waiting in the car for you. Now you know what to do or else...,” said Boss and laughed again.

“What about the boys, Boss?” asked Hari.

“Leave them locked here for now. Let them sit and think about their fate. We’ll pick them up later,” ordered Boss. One by one, the men walked out of the room.

Mr. Sharma too walked slowly towards the door. Just as he was about to step through the door, Mr. Sharma turned and winked at Anirban.

“Did you see that?” asked Anirban, the moment the door closed. “Do you think

Mr. Sharma will help us?”

“Let’s hope so,” replied Samrat, trying not to show how scared he really was.

The time passed slowly in the dark, silent room. Suddenly, the boys heard footsteps running towards the room.

“Oh God, those men are back!” thought Anirban in dismay. “Now, what’s going to happen to us!!”

The door was flung open and several policemen ran into the room. Samrat gave a loud cry of joy. “Thank God, we’re saved!”

Anirban looked up in relief as Mr. P.K. Roy, the Principal, entered the room.

“Great job, boys! You’ve saved the reputation of the school,” he said.

“We’ve finally caught the men who were stealing exam papers,” said the Police Chief. A policeman quickly untied their ropes and the two boys stood up.

“But, Sir, how did you know where to find us?” said a puzzled Anirban.

“It was Mr. Sharma. Thank God, he managed to call me from the office!” replied Mr. Roy.

“We were hoping against hope that Mr. Sharma would help us,” stated Samrat.

“Yes, it’s a sad story, son. Sharma ran up some huge debts from gambling. That led him to the clutches of these men, who started to blackmail him,” said Mr. Roy, shaking his head.

Just then Anirban’s parents entered the room. Anirban ran and hugged his mother.

“The boys have made us all very proud of them,” said Mr. Roy, turning to greet Anirban’s father.

Everybody listened with astonishment as the boys explained how the flickering light had made them suspicious. Finally, it was time to return home.

“All the best for your exams, Anirban!” said Mr. Roy.

“Oh...I’d forgotten all about the exams!” groaned Anirban as everyone burst into laughter.

- Debasree Bhattacharjee



FROM KERALA

THE CLEVER WIFE

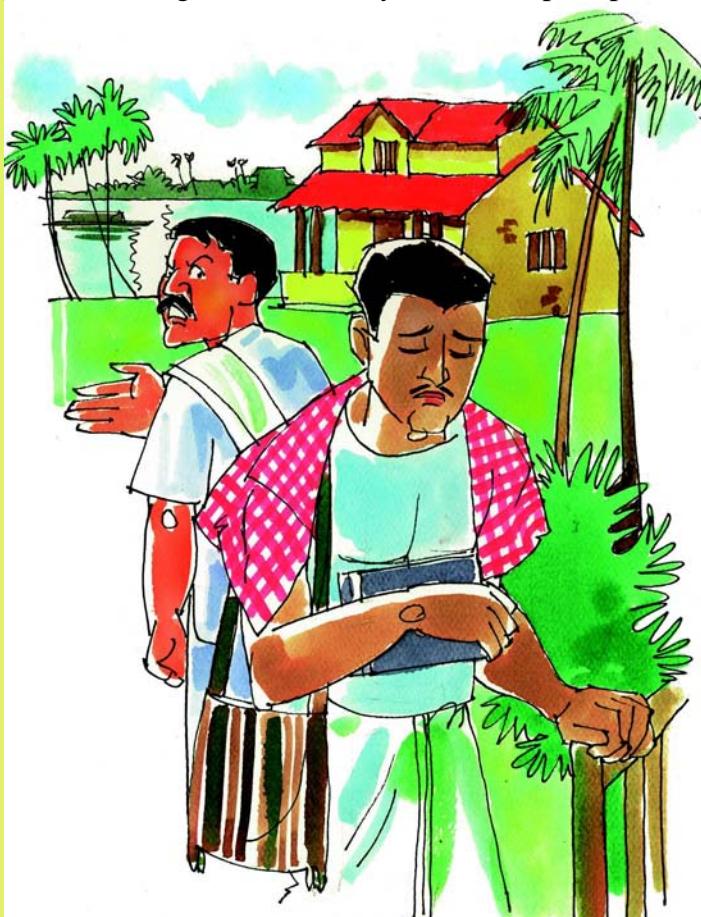
Koman was a poor barber of Kadalundi, a village not far away from Kozhikode, from where the Zamorin Raja ruled. He was an itinerant barber, visiting the houses of his clients early in the morning and attending on them. Unlike the present-day salons which have mirrors on all the three or four walls in which one can easily watch how the barber's scissors and razors worked on the heads or faces, Koman either borrowed a mirror from his client himself or pulled out a small mirror from his bag for him to look at and give his nod of approval or give direction for a 'final touch'. Most of his younger clients preferred to hold the mirror in their hands to keep a close watch on Koman's fingers and how they worked, snip-snap.

He would not wait to be called. He had fixed "routes" and called at the houses on his way, expecting his clients to be ready to make use of his service. Sometimes they would be away or they would be ill, necessitating a visit on a later date. If he failed to go on the day they wanted him, they would be cross with him whenever he went and send him away. He would invariably hear them say "Useless!" as he picked up his bag and turned towards the gate. So much so he began to lose his patrons and he would go home without many coins jingling in his pocket.

Koman and his wife Gomathi slowly began to move to days of poverty and hunger. One day he was taken aback when he heard her curse him, "Useless fellow! How are we going to live?" He kept quiet that day, hoping that she would change her opinion when he came back with enough for two square meals. He picked up his bag and went out without waiting for his daily lunch-packet. He did earn some coins, but knew that they wouldn't be sufficient to buy provisions for even one decent meal for two. There were no more visits that day, and he went back and placed the coins in his wife's hands, expecting her to manage things for the evening and for the next morning. Gomathi took one look at the light heap in her hands and remarked, "Stupid!"

Days passed and there was not one day when he did not hear some description of him or the other from his wife. One day, he came home rather early in the evening and he did not have much to hand over to his wife. "You useless fellow! Do you have any idea how we're going to stay alive?"

He could not help remonstrating that day. "What can I do? You're always calling me useless and stupid, saying that I've never done anything right or I shall never do anything right!" He threw his bag into one corner and



went out to have a wash. Gomathi waited till he came back from the well. "You may starve if you so wish, but I've no intention of doing so."

"If you think you're cleverer," said Koman, "why don't you think of something?"

"Yes, you can beg," said Gomathi.

"Beg?" asked Koman, horrified at the very thought of himself going about with a begging bowl, instead of his barber's kit. "Beg, where?"

"Go to the Zamorin's palace," she said as if she was throwing a challenge. "His daughter is soon getting married, and I'm sure he'll be in a mood to be kind to everybody. Ask him for something."

The next morning, he started but without his bag. It was a long walk, but he went straight to the Zamorin's palace and joined the queue of people waiting for an audience. By the time his turn came, he had decided to ask for 'something' just as his wife had suggested.

"Barber Koman!" the palace attendant called out as he was ushered in.

Koman bowed low, hands folded. As he raised his head, now slowly opening his palms, and looking at the benign face of the Zamorin, he heard the Raja ask, "What do you want, Koma?"

"Something, your majesty!" Koman blurted out.

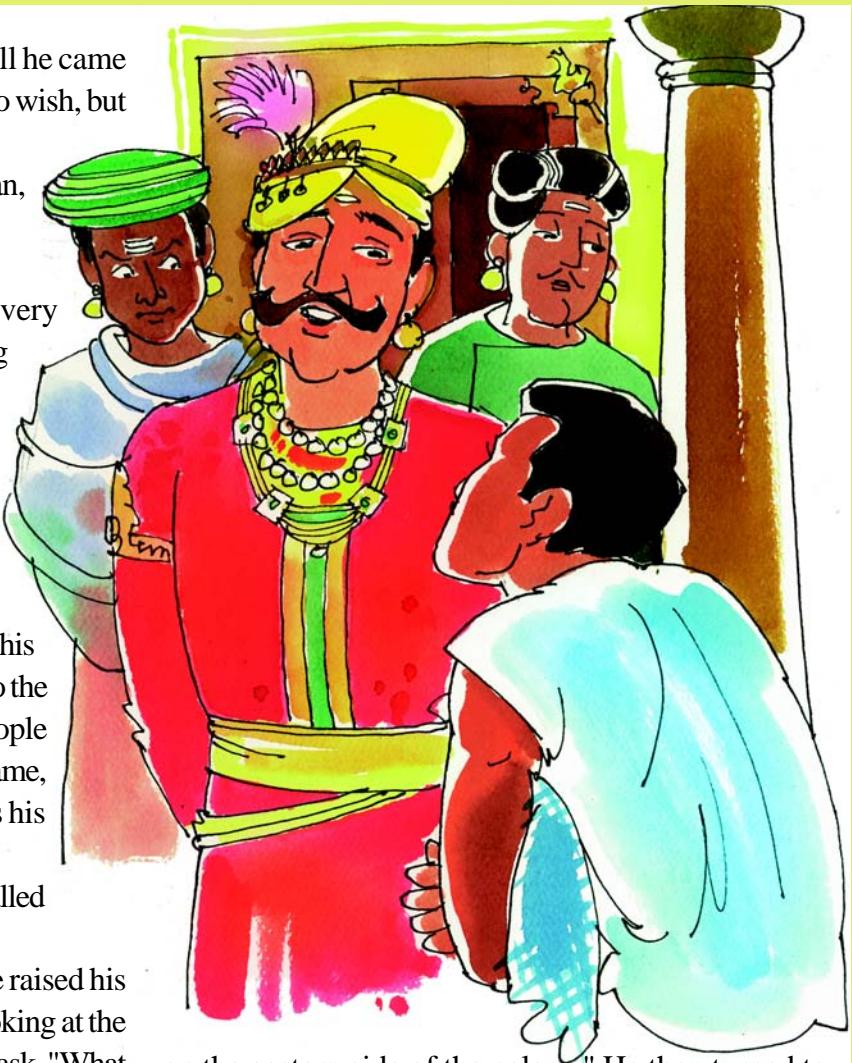
"Something?" The Zamorin had a perplexed look on his face. "What do you mean? Tell me exactly what you want."

"Anything, your highness," said Koman, folding his palms once again in supplication.

The Zamorin thought for a moment. He then looked at his minister, who went near him. "What's your order, Sire?"

The Raja whispered into the minister's ears, "He's a barber, must be serving many in this land. Give him that five acres lying waste. Let's see whether he can raise a crop on that!"

The minister appreciated the Zamorin's wit. Someone who "crops" heads now to raise a crop! He called one of the attendants and said, "Take this man to that wasteland



on the eastern side of the palace." He then turned to Koman, "This man will show you five acres of land. That is a gift from His Majesty to mark the princess's wedding. Come back and tell us what you're growing and how much. Now go, happy."

Koman had enough reason to be happy. He expected only 'something' from the Raja, and see what he had got! It was something that can be seen and measured. His joy was a little dim when he was shown the wasteland, but it was 'something' with which he could shut the usual foul mouth of his wife.

But Gomathi's reaction was unexpected, "Land? And that, too, wasteland!" she exclaimed, "What are we going to do with it? We don't have a plough, we don't have bullocks! How then are we going to plough the land, sow seeds and cut a crop months later? And how shall we eat until then? Go back to the Zamorin and ask for money; that's what we need right now!"

But Koman refused to approach the Zamorin once again. "You've to think of something to do," he told his wife.

Gomathi thought for a while. "Come with me to the land, and when we get there, do exactly as I do," she said as she followed her husband to the plot of land the king had gifted to him.

When they reached the place, Gomathi began to go round, turning a stone here and stamping the ground there, putting on expressions of disappointment and frustration alternately. Whenever Gomathi saw anyone coming near the place, she would sit down on the ground and pose as if she was whiling away her time. Koman did the same thing, though he had no idea what it would all lead to. When she turned a stone to peer into the ground, he did the same with another stone; he too stamped his feet at different places; and when she sat down, he also sat down, sometimes wiping away the perspiration on his forehead. Some passers by would stop for a while, curiously watching the strange goings on for sometime and then go their way.

A group of four men, however, watched the couple for a longer while. One of them went forward and asked Gomathi, "Madam, what're you doing here in the hot sun? And you look worried?"

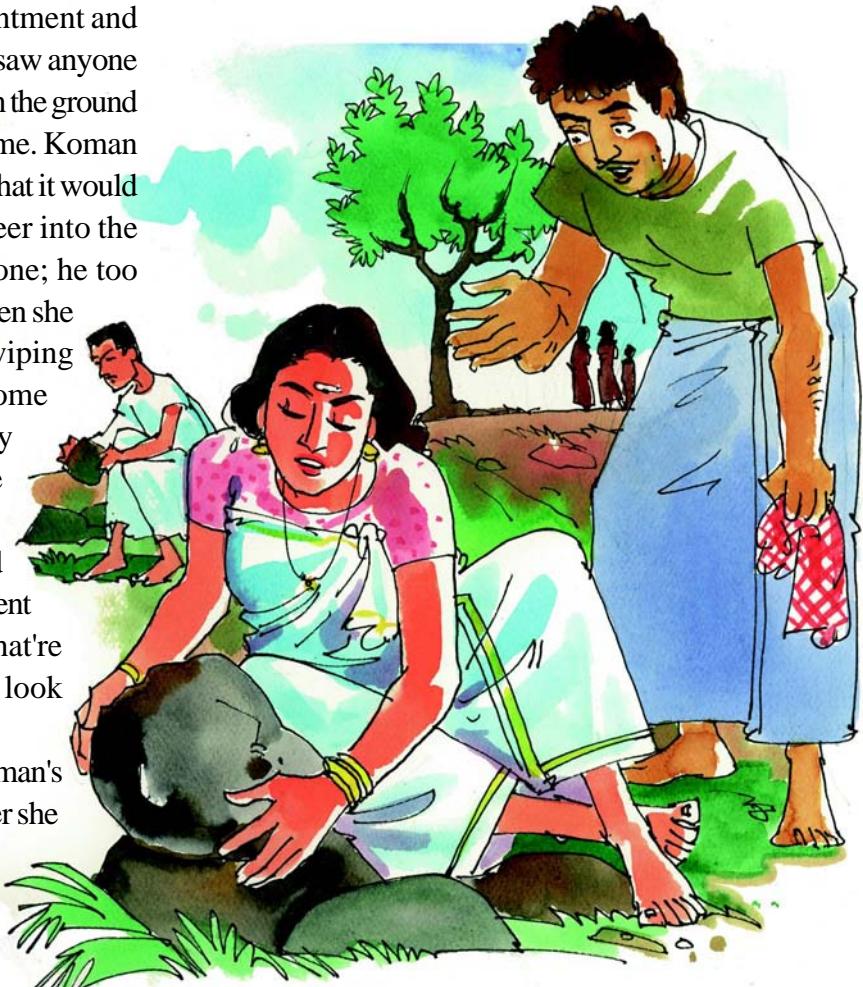
Gomathi looked up and looked into the man's face for a moment longer, hesitating whether she should disclose her intentions. She slowly said, "Thank you for asking me, but I shall tell you only if you promise me that you won't tell another." She paused, till she saw the man nodding his head and leaning to hear her softer words. "We're poor people, though our forefathers were quite rich. My grandfather had this habit of burying pots of gold in this field somewhere, but we just can't find them. The land is so big and we don't know where to dig."

"That's very interesting," remarked the man, twirling his long moustache. He was actually a thief. "Well, all good luck to you and your husband. I hope you'll find the treasure before long." He went back and joined his group,

taking care not to utter a word to his friends till they were far away from the couple waiting for their luck in the hot sun.

Gomathi waited till they were out of sight and told Koman, "Come on, we shall go home and come back tomorrow."

When the couple returned the next morning, they were not surprised to see the place dug up all over. Presumably, the four thieves had not been idle. They must have come back to dig up the place in search of the pots



of gold which were supposed to have been lying buried there.

"See, how I managed to get the whole place dug up," said Gomathi. "We now have only to go the market, buy some seeds and sow. I can foresee days when we'll have not one but three square meals every day. What do you say, my useless husband?"

"Well done, my clever wife!" said Koman, putting on a big smile.

CHANDAMAMA QUIZ-3

Co-sponsored by Infosys FOUNDATION, Bangalore

All the questions are based on the contents of the issues of 2005.

What you should do: 1. Write down the answers; 2. Mention your name, age (you should be below 16), full postal address with PIN Code; 3. Mention your subscriber number, if you are a subscriber; 4. Write on the envelope **CHANDAMAMA QUIZ-3** with your complete address; 5. Mail your entry to reach us by March 31, 2006; 6. The results will be published in the May issue.

Watch for the results of Quiz No.1 and 2 in the April 2006 issue

AN
ALL-CORRECT
ENTRY WILL
FETCH A CASH
PRIZE OF
RS 250*

* If there are more than one all-correct entry, the prize money will be equally divided.

1. In a European country, one's prestige in society used to be "measured" by the height of the chair provided. Where did this practice prevail and when?
2. In which place is the longest statue, in lying down posture, being carved?
3. The first ever "business letter" was exchanged between an Indian ruler and a European king. Who were they? When did the exchange take place?
4. "Everything in God's creation has its own beauty. So, it is in music, too." Who makes this profound statement, and in which story?
5. "The wasteland of war". This was a description of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. To whom would you ascribe this picturesque statement?
6. A dynasty ruled a country for 250 years. The last ruler was a 3-year-old boy, who was made to abdicate. Which was that dynasty?
7. Where does exist a temple dedicated to a well-known Sanskrit poet and playwright? Who was he and where is the temple located?
8. Where in India is English the official language of a State?
9. We usually visualise the Sun god riding a chariot with seven horses. A king rode such a chariot that arose from a lake. Who was that king?
10. Which sequence in a story does this picture depict?

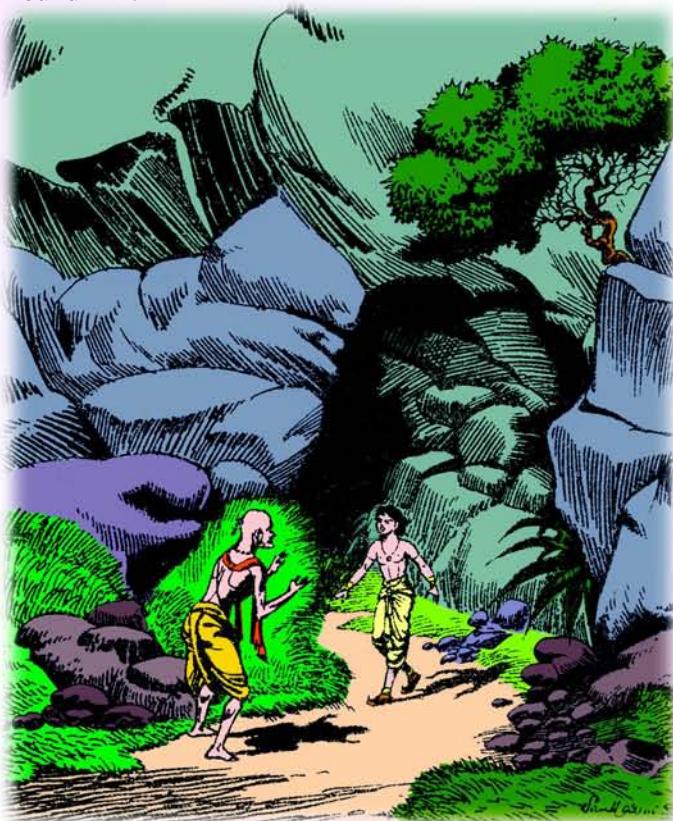


GLIMPSES OF THE DEVI BHAGAVATAM

So, you desire to take my son, do you? But the rules of the Yajna say that even an animal marked for sacrifice should have grown conscious of its existence. You cannot deem a month-old child to be conscious! You should let a few years pass so that we can perform his thread ceremony!" said the king.

Varuna said angrily, "I'm afraid, you are trying to deprive me of whatever is due to me. I hope, you don't forget that the consequences of your action can be quite grave! I shall return when your son's thread ceremony has been performed. If you try to play any trick on me then, I'll throw a terrible curse upon you."

Varuna went back. The king warned the inmates of the palace and all the courtiers and officers that the prince should not come to know about the fate that was hanging round him.



But someone leaked it to the prince. He slipped away from the palace as soon as his thread ceremony was over.

When Varuna came again, the king told him, "I'm helpless. I do not know the whereabouts of the prince."

"You've deceived me!" yelled the angry Varuna. He then uttered a curse that resulted in the king being beset with a disease.

The king was reduced to misery. He was already deep in sorrow on account of his son's disappearance. Now the disease caused him much physical pain.

The prince, Lohitaksha, was hiding in a cave. From a traveller he heard about the king's illness. He decided to return to the palace. But Indra, donning a disguise, met him on the way and told him, "Your father cannot be cured without yourself being sacrificed to Varuna. Why do you want to walk into the jaws of death?"

Lohitaksha changed his mind and returned to his cave.

One day, the king asked the royal priest, Vasishtha, "How can my ailment be cured?"

"Since you cannot sacrifice your son, better adopt a child as your son and sacrifice him. Your disease, as you know, is due to a curse. It is only by fulfilling this condition that you can be free from it," said Vasishtha.

The king asked his minister to find out a boy who must be carrying auspicious marks on his person. The boy's parents could be given as much compensation as would satisfy them and they should agree to the boy being sacrificed.

The minister roamed about the kingdom and found a Brahmin named Ajigarta. He had three sons, all of them bearing auspicious marks. But the eldest boy was dear to his father and the youngest was dear to his mother. The parents agreed to their second son, Sunahsefa, being taken away for the sacrifice.

Sunahsefa was a noble boy. He realised the dilemma

27. A SACRIFICE AVOIDED

the king was facing. He accompanied the minister willingly. People who saw him were charmed by his innocence and courage.

As soon as the minister returned in the palace along with Sunahsefa, preparations for the Yajna began.

Sunahsefa took a bath, put on new clothes, and was adorned with flowers, and taken to the platform where he was to be sacrificed, and tied to a pillar.

It so happened that sage Viswamitra reached the venue of the Yajna at that time. He took pity on the boy and asked the king to release him.

But the king was in no mood to oblige Viswamitra.

The sage then went near the boy and taught him a hymn meant for pleasing Varuna. The boy chanted the hymn with such devotion and sincerity that everybody present there shed tears. Soon Varuna appeared on the spot. He declared that the boy's devotion had earned for the king the benefit of a sacrifice. He said it was not necessary to kill the boy.

Sunahsefa was set free and the king was also cured of his malady. All were happy.

However, Viswamitra did not forget the fact that the king had not paid any heed to his request for setting the boy free. One day, while the king was in the forest for hunting, Viswamitra appeared before him disguised as an old Brahmin. The king was persuaded to donate

everything to the Brahmin and go and live in the forest.

This revengeful act of Viswamitra annoyed Vasishtha. He confronted Viswamitra and said, "You're a deceitful person. Your meditation is no better than that of a stork who only waits to kill fish, standing with his eyes shut. Better become a stork!"

Viswamitra too cursed him. "If I am to be a stork, there is no reason why you should not become one, too!"

Consequently both of them became storks. Both lived in lake Manasarovar and often fought with each other. Once Lord Brahma appeared there and freed them from their curses and sent them back to their respective hermitages. Soon thereafter another incident took place:

Nimi, the son of Ikshvaku, was a pious and righteous king. He had founded an ideal colony for Brahmins near the hermitage of sage Gautam.

King Nimi decided to perform a special kind of Yajna. He spent a long time making preparations for it. Then he met Vasishtha, the priest of his dynasty, and requested him to perform the ritual.

"I've already promised Indra to conduct a Yajna dedicated to the Supreme Goddess. You've to wait till I finish it," said Vasishtha.

"O sage, you're my family priest. Isn't it your duty to give priority to our needs? Indra can wait!" said Nimi.

(To continue)





A QUESTION



King Chandrapir is said to have reigned in Kashmir during the 7th century A.D. Known for his bravery and keen sense of justice, he was also called 'Vajraditya' by his subjects. He built a temple in Srinagar dedicating it to Tribhuvanashwami, another name for Lord Vishnu. There is a legend associated with the building of this temple.

The story goes that when Chandrapir decided to build this temple, he asked experts to find a suitable site and also prepare a design how it would look like when it was built. The builders got busy planning, while another team went scouting for the best possible site - not a very easy

task in the mountainous region of Kashmir! Finally, they located what seemed to be the ideal spot from every point of view. King Chandrapir went and saw it and asked them to go ahead.

But there was something the king was not aware of. And certainly no one told him anything about it. The plan of the temple included a portion of land that belonged to a poor cobbler. Perhaps the royal builders did not consider him important enough to be consulted and took it for granted that they could simply pay him some money and ask him to clear out when the time came. Or they might have thought that whatever a poor cobbler felt did not matter when it came to a massive project like a temple. They simply ignored him and went ahead with their work. The temple of Tribhuvanashwami, nearly ready, was indeed a thing of beauty and everyone who passed by admired it and looked forward to the day it would be thrown open for worship. The cobbler, not even dreaming that his hut would soon be pulled down to complete a corner of the temple, was happy too. But he got a rude shock when the royal builders landed up before his hut one morning and told him to clear out to make room for the great temple.

"But how can I?" he cried "It is the land of my forefathers. It belongs to me, not the king."

"Land indeed! It is no more than a hut," they said, jeering at him. "Anyway, the king wants the temple there, so you have to get out - no point arguing about it. We can't wait all day!"

"I don't believe you," said the cobbler. "King Chandrapir is just and kind. He would never make a poor man homeless."

"Stupid fool! Who says he'll render you homeless?"

OF JUSTICE

said the builders annoyed. "We'll pay you money and you can go and build a hut elsewhere. Somewhere in the forest or among the rocks."

"No, I shall not," said the cobbler obstinately, "none of you can force me to leave my land."

The builders were in a plight. They had certainly not expected a poor cobbler to stand his ground so firmly. No amount of bullying or frightening had the desired effect. He simply refused to leave.

"What do we do now?" asked one of the builders. "The temple can't be completed until this hut is pulled down."

"Give him a sound beating and see if it will make him see sense," suggested another.

"Throw him out physically and then get on with the work," said the third.

"No, we can't do that," said the fourth, "we shall all get into serious trouble if the king gets to know that we've used brute force to get the land. You know he never allows anyone to treat the poor unkindly."

"Then, what are we to do? Can you suggest a way out?" asked all three together.

"The only thing we can do is go and tell the king the whole story and let him take the ultimate decision."

"We will look so foolish," said the first builder frowning, "and I really don't know what the king will say."

"Whatever he says, we just have to risk it," said the fourth builder, "there is no other way."

The next morning the four builders sought an audience with the king. He looked really displeased when he heard what they had to say.

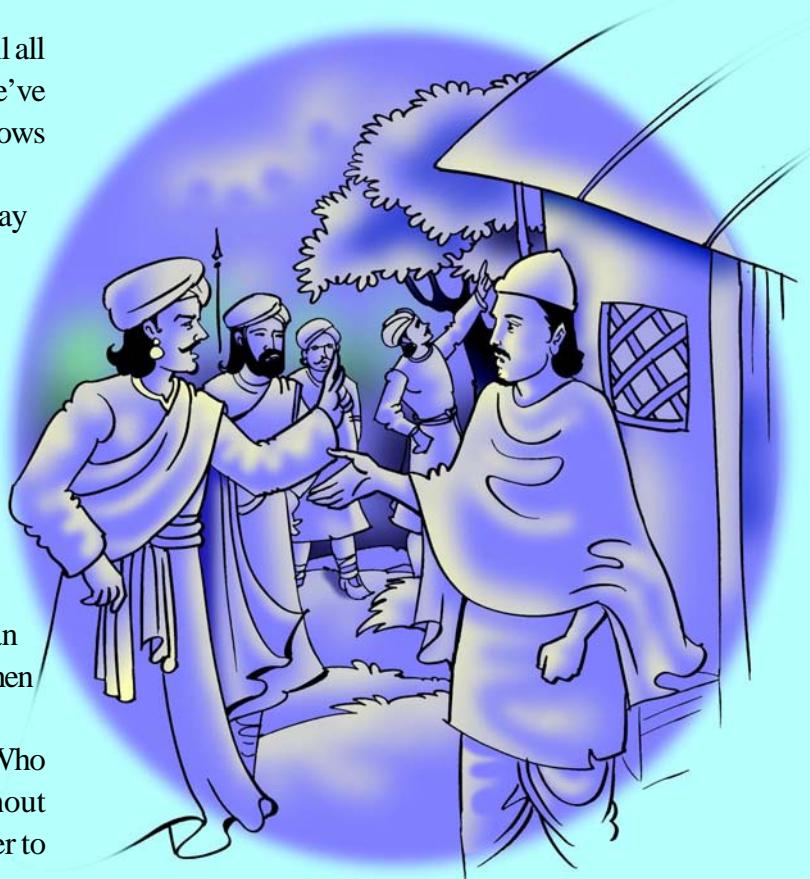
"It was all your fault," the king told the builders. "Who asked you to include his land in your plan without consulting me about it or at least getting the cobbler to agree before you started building?"

"Your majesty, we never dreamt that he could possibly refuse," said the first builder. "We had offered to pay him for building another hut," said the second.

"We thought he would feel honoured to give up his bit of land for building the temple," said the third.

"Can you suggest a way out, your majesty?" asked the fourth builder quietly. "All our work will go in vain if the cobbler does not let us take his bit of land to complete the temple."

King Chandrapir was lost in thoughts. Finally he said, "I don't see any way out unless the cobbler gives up his land voluntarily. I am the king of the land; I am supposed to protect my subjects from injustice. I can't be the one to grab their property unlawfully even for the sake of building a temple."





“But what are we to do? The building is nearly complete except for one corner,” cried the builders.

“That cannot be helped,” said the king firmly. “Stop all work and find another site for the temple. I shall not allow anyone to turn out the poor cobbler from his home.”

The builders left the place dejected. The ministers felt it was now time they took over. They kept sending messages to the cobbler from dawn to dusk. They offered him a lot of money to vacate the place; they explained how much the king wanted a temple at that site and they told him how lucky he was to have such a wonderful opportunity to be of service to the king. Finally, tired of all their requests, the cobbler informed the ministers that he wanted to meet the king personally and tell him about his final decision. “What cheek!” cried the ministers enraged. “Don’t forget you are a mere cobbler! How can you dare suggest a royal interview?”

“If you feel I am too humble a person to ask it, ask the king to stop outside the temple site for a moment and I shall speak to him then.”

When King Chandrapir heard of the cobbler’s request, he did not consider it impertinent at all and told his ministers that every subject, however humble, had the right to seek a royal audience. On his next visit to

where the temple had been half constructed, he sent for the cobbler. He stood before the king with folded hands. “Sire, I understand you want my property,” he said fearlessly.

“Yes, but only if you are willing,” said the king smiling to reassure him. “As you know, I don’t want the land for myself, but for completing the half-built temple where everyone may worship. But I shall pay you more than a fair price and see to it that you have a comfortable home of your own. But tell me, why are you so unwilling to give it up, even when I am offering you double the money plus another home?”

“Because, Sire, money cannot buy everything,” said the cobbler. “I know it may seem ridiculous to you but my lowly hut, however humble, is full of memories - of my parents, my grandparents, my childhood and growing up years and all that I care for. How can I give it up for money?”

“I understand,” said the king gently, “I shall not ask you to give it up. I shall find another place for my temple.”

But the king’s words had a magical effect on the poor cobbler. He realized how lucky he was to have a king who understood and who could sacrifice his own dreams to make a poor cobbler happy. “Sire, I’m sorry, I’m being unreasonable, I know,” he said at last. “You shall have my land and house but I have one request.”

“What is it?” asked the king curiously.

“Please step inside my hut just once and it shall be the best payment I can think of.”

Although the ministers gasped at his daring request, the king smiled and said, “Of course, I will.”

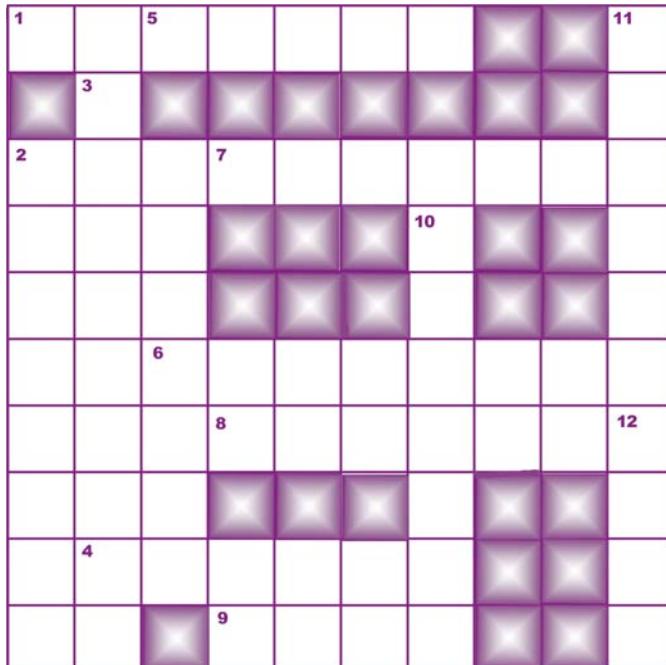
King Chandrapir went to the cobbler’s hut and presented him with a lot of money and later built a beautiful cottage for him.

The temple of Tribhuvananswami was built and everyone was happy.

-Swapna Dutta

PUZZLE DAZZLE

FLOWERS CROSSWORD



Here is a crossword on flowers. Solve it using the clues given below.



collection of nearly 2,000 varieties of every possible colour, except green (4).

Down:

Across:

1. This flower appears in pink, orange, rose or white (7).
4. The national flower of India. It is generally grown in ponds and pools. Vivid rose is the common colour; pure white flowers are also widely seen (5).
6. They are native to tropical Asia. The plants are among the showiest of flowering shrubs. Its colours range from white through pink to red, from yellow and apricot to orange, depending on the variety (6).
7. These flowers are treasured for their showy blossoms that are often quite large and brightly coloured (8).
8. This flower is also called Chameli. Waxy-white with a yellow centre, it is highly fragrant (6).
9. The garden in Chandigarh, India has a Chandamama

2. This flower is native to Chile. They are small, inconspicuous, and creamy green (8).
3. These flowers are one of the most easily recognized of all aquatic plants. They are native to the eastern half of North America, including southern Canada (9).
5. Introduced into India by the Arabs from Abyssinia (now Ethiopia), these scarlet flowers are borne in large bunches (8).
10. The sweet fragrance of the silver white flowers is noticed at nights. Usually women like to have this in their hair-do (7).
11. The bright orange-crimson upward facing flowers is globular-shaped; they grow in clusters, and in higher altitudes (5).
12. The origin of this flower is the Himalayas and South-East Asia. It is generally used as cut flowers. The common colours are yellow and white (4).

- by R Vaasugi

Across: 1. Begonia, 4. Lotus, 6. Hibiscus, 7. Chamomile, 8. Orchid, 9. Rose, 10. Iris, 11. Tulip, 12. Iris.
Down: 2. Xanthium, 3. Water Lily, 5. Iris, 7. Chandamama, 8. Begonia, 9. Chamomile, 10. Orchid, 11. Rose, 12. Iris.

ANSWERS:



GODDARD SHOWS



October 4, 1957, marks a milestone in man's conquest of space. That day, Russia launched the *Sputnik*. It was the first man-made satellite in space. An air of excitement gripped the whole world. Newspapers presented the news in bold headlines. TV channels stepped in to provide visual pictures. The whole of mankind rejoiced at the success of Russian scientists.

Today satellites and spaceships have become the in-things. Several satellites are in space. Quite a few of them are observing the planets from close quarters. Some of them are moving far out to study the worlds beyond. Yet we feel thrilled every time a space probe is launched. The novelty about spaceships never seems to die.

Rockets were first tried out in China. Soon neighbouring countries learnt about rockets. During the war with the British, Tipu Sultan used short-range rockets to tear through the British army. The British gathered some of the spent shells of the rockets and sent them to Britain. Scientists worked on them. Soon they developed rockets.

But they could not cover long distances. Nor could they go far up in space. The fuel in use then was gunpowder. More powerful fuel was needed to achieve a greater height and range. Nobody knew of such a fuel. So rocketry did not make any marked progress.

The break came in 1903. In that year, Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, a Russian scientist, published a book titled '*Exploration of the Universe with Reactive Devices*'. He proposed the use of liquid fuel to give increased thrust to rockets. He also proposed multi-stage rockets. Rightly is Tsiolkovsky called the Father of Modern Rocket Theory! He set the stage for man's conquest of space.

Tsiolkovsky's work inspired Robert Hutchings Goddard of the U.S.A. His interest in rocketry began while he was at school. He had gone to the library to borrow a book to read. One of his teachers was around. The teacher saw him browsing around and asked him, "What are you looking for?"

"A thriller. Something that is futuristic in concept, sir," Goddard replied.

"Have you read the novels of Jules Verne? His novels are brilliant dreams of what the future has in hold for man. Give them a try. I'm sure you'll be fascinated," the teacher advised.

"Thank you for the tip, sir," Goddard smiled.

With the help of the librarian, he located the novels of Jules Verne. He read every one of them. Especially



THE WAY FOR SPACE PROBES

exciting was the story about man's trip to the moon.

Were the ideas impractical? Were they just dreams of the novelist? Goddard sought answers to these questions. He pursued Physics as the subject of his study. After completing his doctoral work, he became a faculty member at the Clark University, Massachusetts.

He began experimenting with rockets. Many friends wondered what he was up to.

"You've your head in the clouds," sniped a friend.

"You may be right there. Do you know that some day... that day, I think, isn't far off... the ideas that haunt my mind may take a man up into the clouds?" Goddard replied.

"The aeroplanes already do that," the friend drove in a fact.

"How far can an aircraft climb? Can it go farther into the skies so that it'll be free from the earth's gravity? My rockets may just achieve that. Once we have them, nobody can hold man down. Man may go to the moon, the planets, even soar beyond the solar universe? My experiments will help that cause," Goddard defended his thesis. In March 1915, he fired his first rocket. It rose to a height of 150 m.

Four years later, he published a paper titled, 'A Method of Reaching Extreme Altitudes'. Goddard explained how rockets could be used to launch scientific equipment into space. He also indicated the possibility of sending a rocket to the moon. Many scientists commended him for his pioneering work. They agreed that the ideas he had projected were scientifically feasible.

But some people said Goddard was mad. In an editorial titled 'A Severe Strain on Credibility', *The New York Times* observed, "Goddard seems to lack the knowledge ladled out in schools." What was this knowledge? It was limited to the one about thrust and

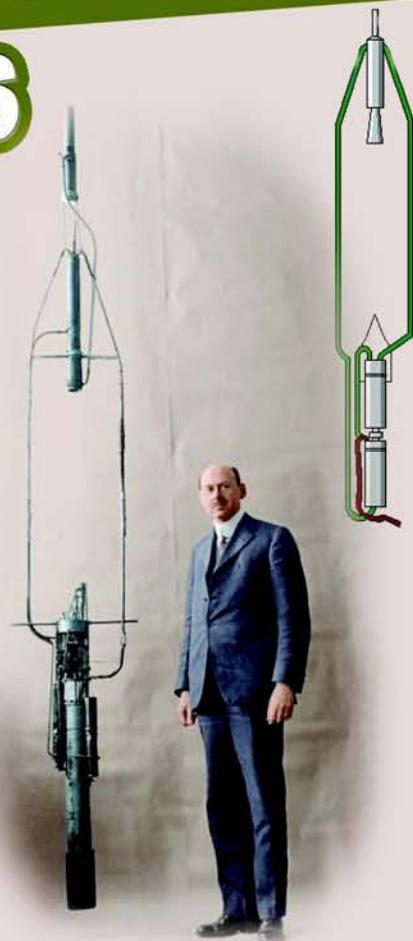
flight. The editorial writer did not understand the power of improved fuels. He did not know much about the limits of Earth's gravity.

Goddard brushed aside his critics. By 1930, Goddard shifted from solid fuel to liquid fuel. He held liquid oxygen in a tank. Fuel was stored in another compartment. The two components were pumped into a combustion chamber to mix, burn and form the hot gas. The gas sought an outlet. It pushed out through the only exit available, an opening at the base of the rocket. The gas rushed out through the opening. The force of exit of the gas helped push the rocket up. Liquid fuel gave better thrust. Hence the speed with which the rocket soared into space was also higher.

Goddard conducted many tests. Gradually the rockets became more powerful. In the final years of his tests, the rockets roared into space at speeds like 800 kmph, flying up to heights of 2.4 km. That made one thing clear: any object that escaped the gravitational range of the earth could be directed towards the moon and the planets, even into outer space. His prediction came true. In July 1969, man landed on the moon.

The New York Times remembered that it had once called Goddard mad. It realized its mistake and published an apology in the issue in which the story of man's touchdown on moon was reported.

- R.K.Murthi



STUMPED BY A BEGGAR

Ravi and Surya were friends from childhood. Both studied in the same school. Later, Ravi became a teacher while Surya started working as an assistant to the zamindar. Though both were friends, they had contrasting qualities. Ravi would take the views of a number of persons before doing anything. Surya, on the other hand, would do everything at his own discretion. He would make his own decisions.

The two friends visited the Krishna temple located on a hill every Saturday. One day as they were climbing the steps, they saw a man returning. Ravi asked him whether the temple was open. He replied, the temple might have closed. Ravi said, "Surya, what shall we do now?"

Surya said, "Why did you ask him, in the first place? What he said may not be correct. Let's go and find out for ourselves." But Ravi hesitated. He started looking for other persons returning from the temple. Soon he found someone and repeated the question to him. He replied he did not know. Ravi did not want to climb any further, but Surya persuaded him to proceed. Ultimately, they found the temple open.

Surya then censured his friend. "This is the problem with you. Don't keep seeking others' opinion for everything. You might get misled. When you have decided to do something, stick to your decision."

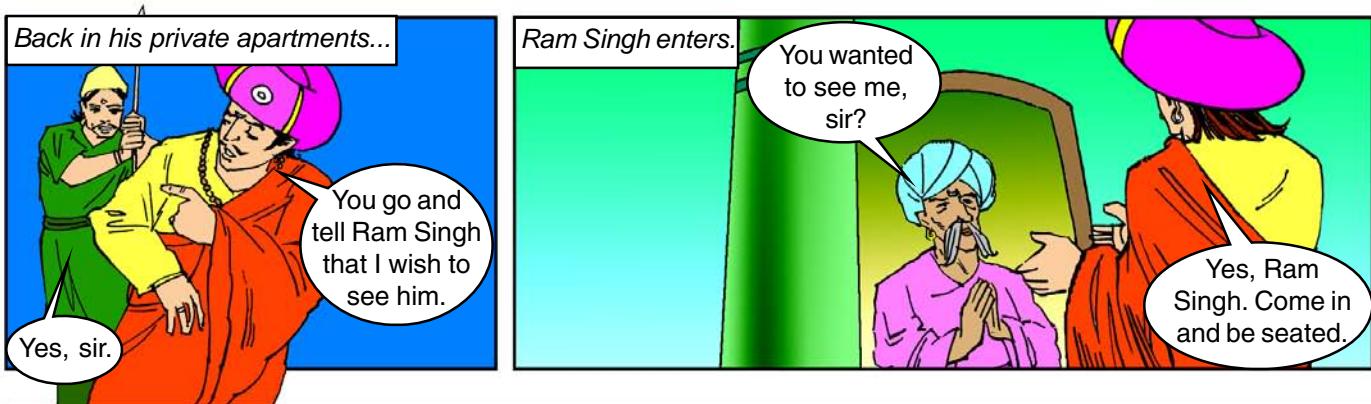
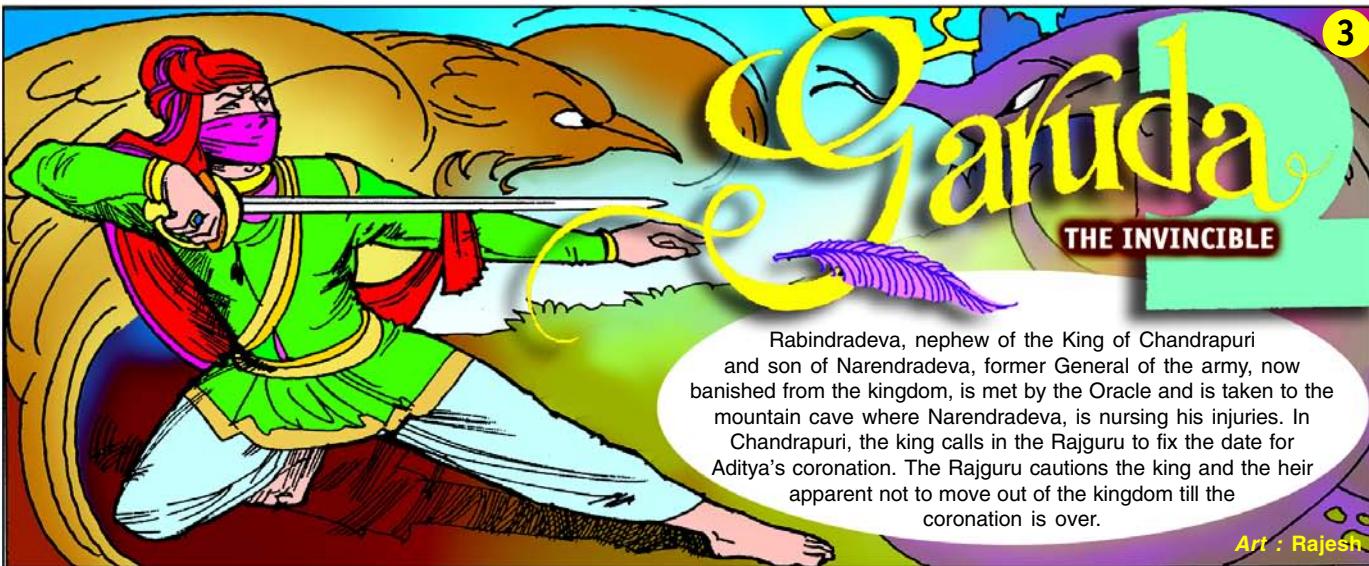
Both had a good darshan. When they were returning, they saw a beggar seeking alms from the devotees. He recognized Ravi because he used to get alms regularly from him. He extended his begging bowl. Ravi dropped a small coin. The beggar was far from pleased. "Sir, earlier you used to give me a rupee."

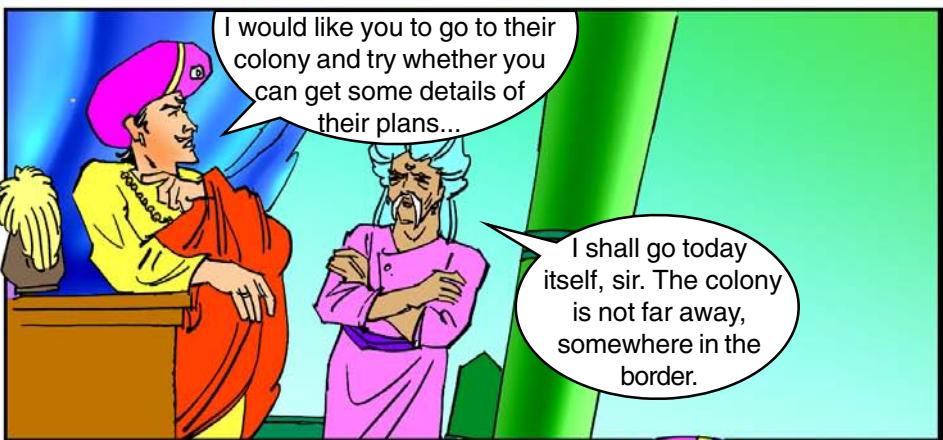
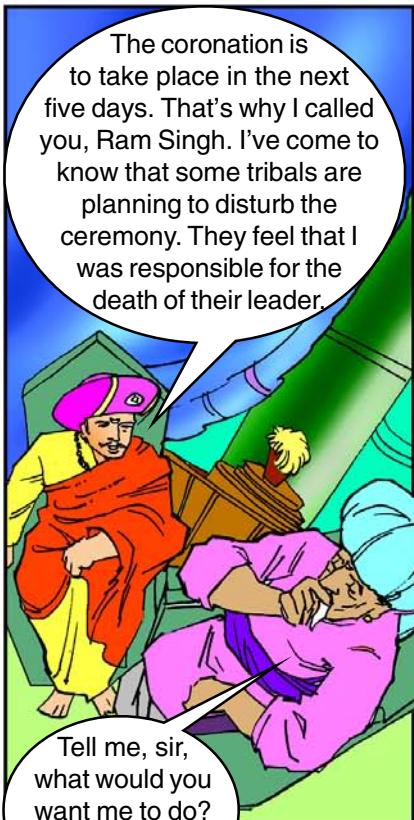
Ravi explained, "Old man! When I was unmarried, I used to give you a rupee, because I could afford it then. After I got married, I could give you only 50 paise. Now my commitments have increased. I've to save money for the marriage of my daughters. So I can afford only this much."

Pat came the remark from the beggar. "It's very unfair, sir! Do you want to celebrate the marriage of your children at my expense?"

Ravi was completely taken aback by the response. Surya laughed and said, "Ravi, you deserved it! All along I've been telling you not to go about seeking opinions from anybody and everybody. The beggar, I think, has taught you a good lesson today!"

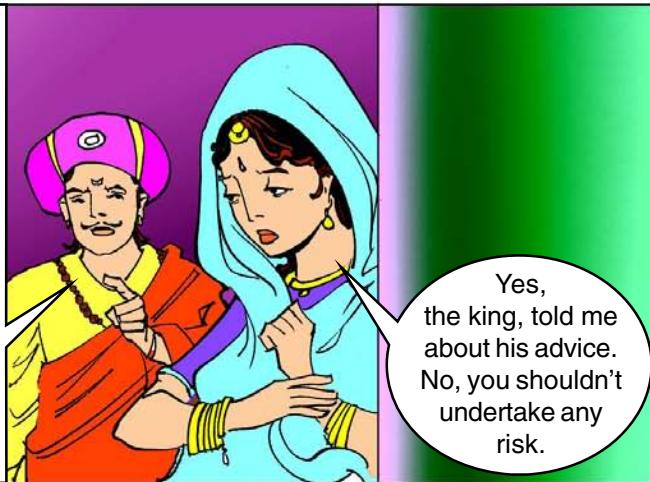




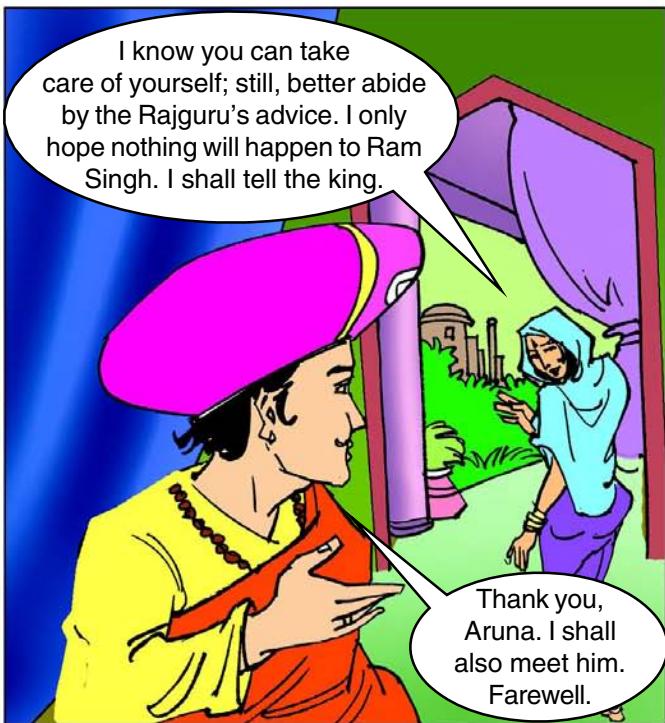




It appears some tribals are planning to disturb the coronation. I asked Ram Singh to find out some details. He was expected to come back yesterday. I would have gone in search of him but for the advice of our Rajguru.



Yes, the king, told me about his advice. No, you shouldn't undertake any risk.

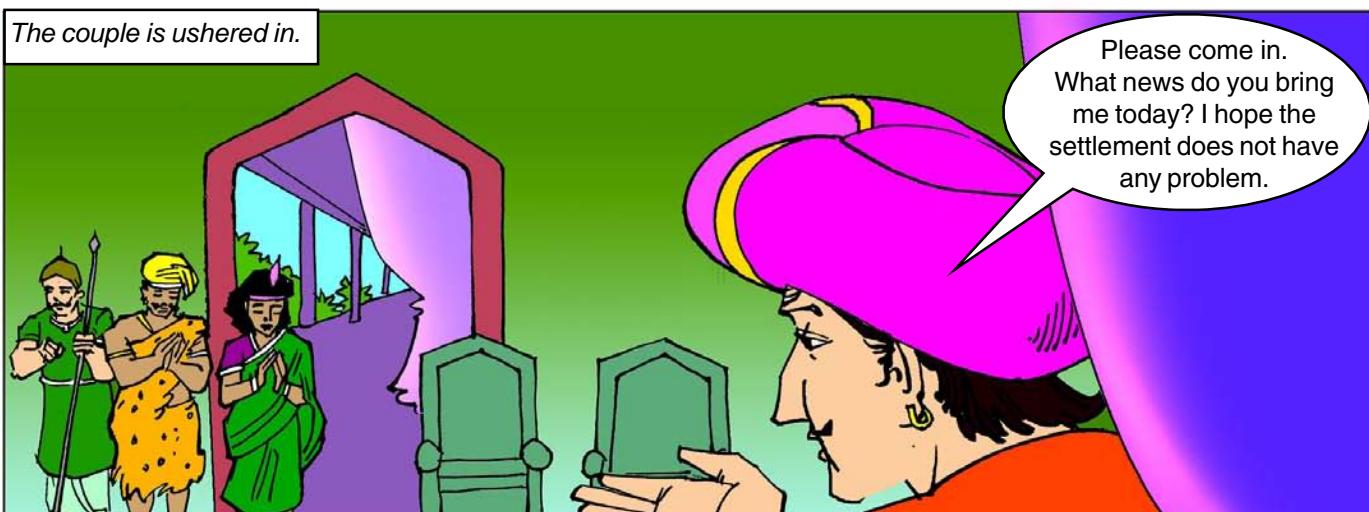


Thank you, Aruna. I shall also meet him. Farewell.

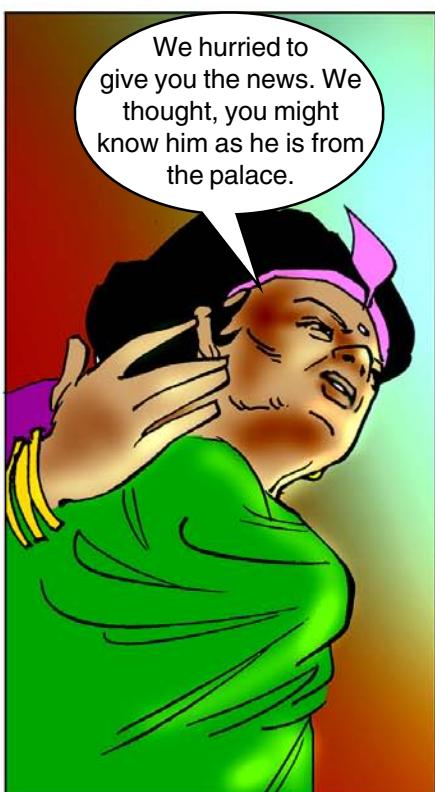


Bring them in.

Sir, a tribal couple waits for an audience.



Please come in. What news do you bring me today? I hope the settlement does not have any problem.



children IN THE NEWS

Three children between the ages of 10 and 13—the only ones to represent India at the Global Art International Competition held in Bangkok, Thailand—came back winning some top prizes.

They are Advika Mukherjee (10), Jefferin Annie Alex (11) and M.S. Abhinaya (13). The topic given to them was 'Happy family, happy nation'. What is special about this achievement is, the otherwise talented children had only three to four months of training from Global Art, Malaysia, at their centre in Chennai. They competed against more than 200 children from 30 countries world wide, some of them attending the approved courses for longer periods. The three children had been winning prizes at the local competitions.

INDIAN CHILDREN AMONG 'ARCHITECTS'



A 12-member students team is getting ready to fly out to NASA's Kennedy Space Centre in July to take part in the final of the International Space Settlement Design. The students, all of them drawn from nine schools in Hyderabad, have been designated as Space Architects. They won this accolade after designing a space hotel orbiting the sun. They were given 21 hours to complete the design of the hotel which has to cater to the basic needs of its inhabitants, besides providing entertainment and communication facilities. The two criteria were the time taken to reach the orbit and the minimum cost of the project.

Since 1984, NASA has been organising such contests. The space hotel was the fifth in the series. This is the first time a team from south India was reaching the finals. At the Kennedy Space Centre, they will be expected to design a city on Mars. Let us wish them good luck!

CHENNAI CHILDREN WIN PAINTING PRIZES



THE KING'S BROTHER-IN-LAW



After conquering many kingdoms, Dharamsen became a powerful Emperor in his own right. Those rulers who were conquered were made chieftains in their own kingdoms under the control of the Emperor. They were made to pay tribute periodically to the Emperor. With the money he thus collected, Dharamsen undertook many welfare measures. So the citizens led a very contented life under his reign. But the kingdom of Koshal proved to be an exception. While all other kingdoms were prospering, Koshal was lagging behind in welfare schemes. The Emperor was quite concerned, but he could not make out the real reasons for the backwardness of Koshal.

The Emperor was very fond of the company of Gunanidhi, who happened to be the nephew of his chief advisor. Gunanidhi had the gift of the gab and also a sound sense of humour which endeared him to the Emperor. One day, Gunanidhi expressed his desire to go to Koshal, since he wanted to visit the numerous temples there. The Emperor readily agreed and asked him to find out the actual state of affairs in Koshal and why it was in a backward condition.

At Koshal he did not disclose his identity. One

day, when he went to a Siva temple in a village called Rampur, he was so much impressed by the idol of Lord Nataraj that he raised his arms and chanted loudly, "Hara Hara Mahadev!". At once, he was arrested by two guards. Gunanidhi was perplexed! "Why have you arrested me? I haven't committed any offence!" he protested.

The guards replied: "Don't you know praying aloud inside the temple is an offence in this village?" This perplexed him even more. He pleaded with them that he was a stranger to the place and he was not aware of the rules. But the guards insisted on taking him to the chief to face a trial. Just then, a young man approached him secretly and whispered into his ears, "Bribe these guys and you'll be let off."

Gunanidhi was shocked. "Bribe them? After all, praying loudly can't be considered an offence! I shall face the chief." The young man told him that the village chief was a fraud and he would ask for a much higher amount as bribe. Gunanidhi gave the guards a rupee each and he was freed. He thanked the young man for his timely suggestion. "If the chief himself is a corrupt fellow, why aren't the villagers reporting it to the king of Koshal?"

The young man replied, "How can we report against him? He is the brother-in-law of the king. In order to take bribes, the officials and their staff make their own rules to suit their convenience."

Then, Gunanidhi introduced himself to him. The young man was surprised to know that he was a close relative of the chief advisor to the Emperor. He advised him to disclose his identity wherever he moved around so that he would not face any harassment.

Gunanidhi was now treated everywhere with respect and none dared ask him for a bribe. But he could observe that corruption was deeply rooted in all spheres. The villagers remained mute witnesses. He was utterly surprised to know the reason for the silence of the people. For, he learnt that the chief of every village was one or other brother-in-law of the king!

At last, he returned to the capital and apprised the Emperor about everything. He remarked: "The king of Koshal seems to be having thousands of wives like Krishna to have a brother-in-law posted in each village of Koshal." The emperor knew that the king of Koshal had only two wives and one of them was his own sister! The other woman could not have so many brothers! Soon, he sent a team of spies to find out the truth. After unearthing all the facts, the

team returned to the capital and apprised the Emperor of the truth.

The king of Koshal had appointed the brother of his second wife as the chief of the army. He was an incompetent man and corrupt as well. The courtiers in the capital of Koshal would often secretly make snide remarks about the chief and soon the word 'the king's brother-in-law' became a synonym for a worthless and corrupt fellow. Since the king of Koshal never really bothered to rule his kingdom properly and the chiefs were appointed actually by the second queen in consultation with her brother, they were all looked upon as the king's brother-in-law. They never really bothered about administration and everyone was referred to as 'the king's brother-in-law'. The innocent villagers actually came to believe that.

The Emperor realized his folly. He had never interfered with the administration of Koshal, since the ruler was his relative. He summoned the king of Koshal and reprimanded him severely for his slackness.

He weeded out all the corrupt and incompetent officials from his kingdom and appointed the right persons in their places. He kept the administration of Koshal under his direct control then onwards and very soon, the kingdom of Koshal prospered like other kingdoms.





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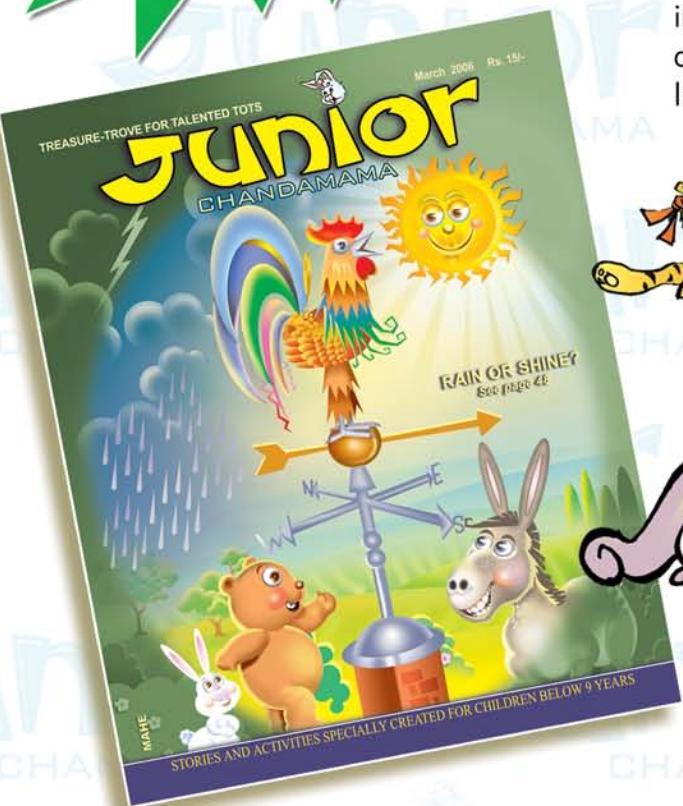
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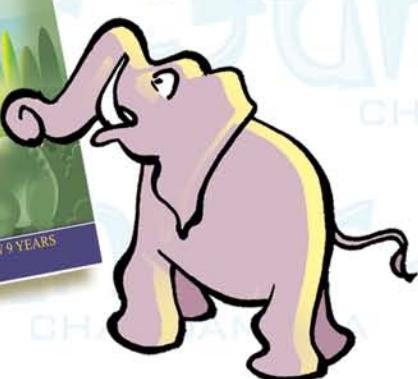
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